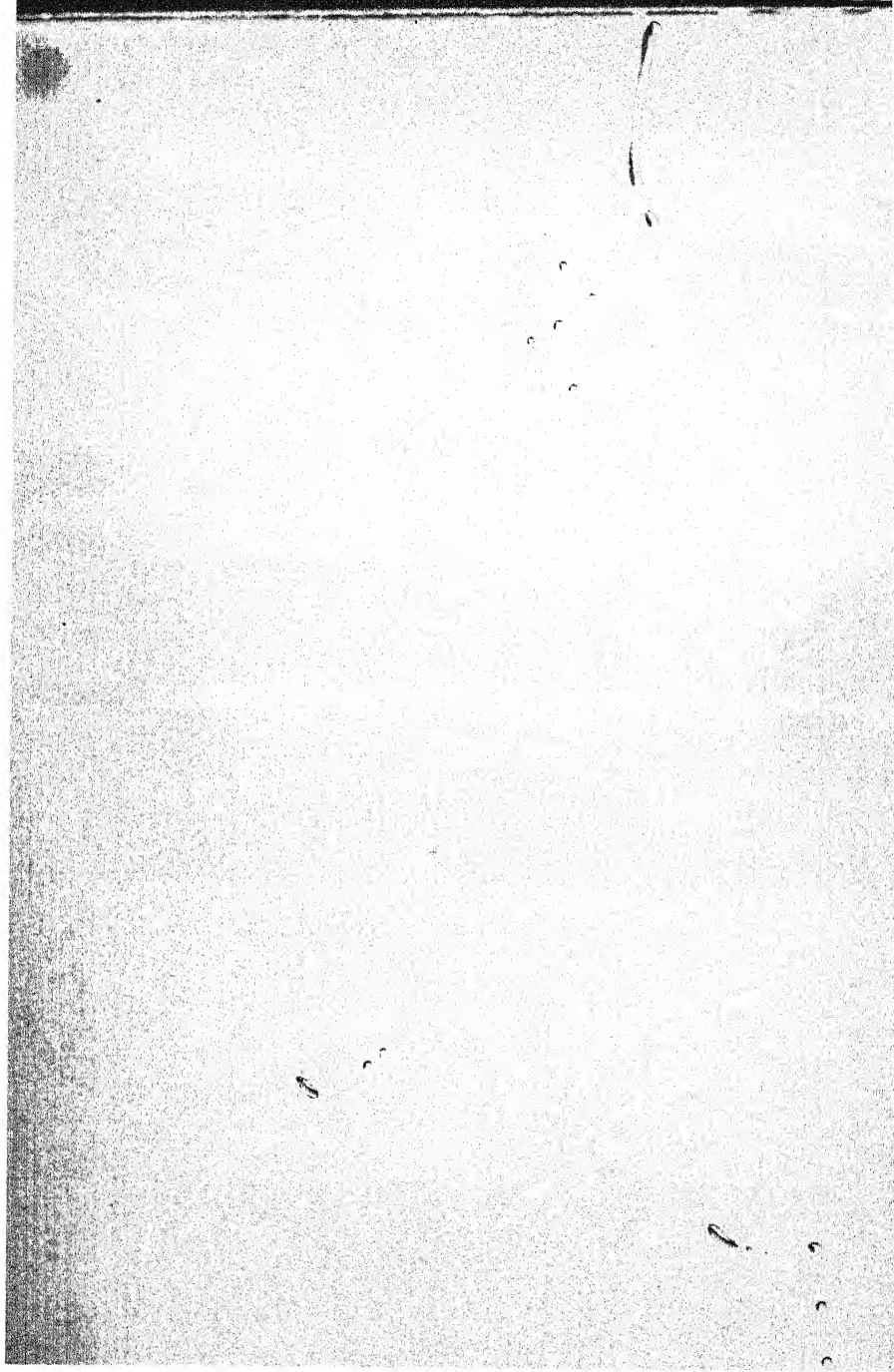


SEMANTICS:

STUDIES IN THE SCIENCE OF MEANING



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BY

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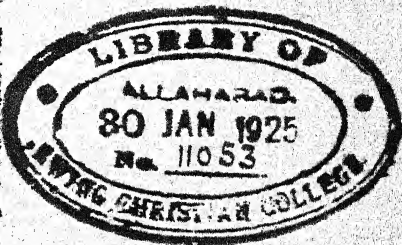
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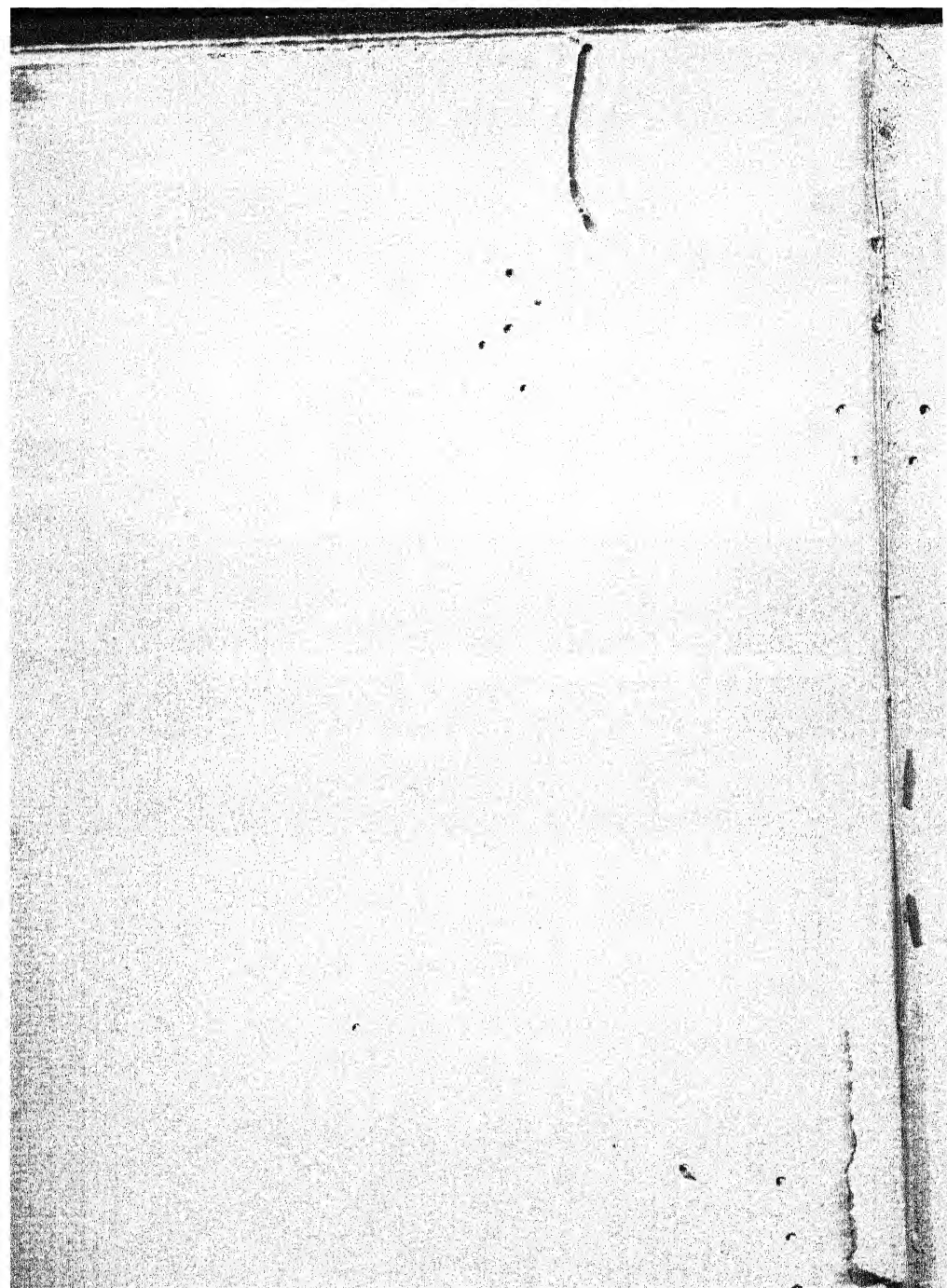
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I WISH to express my most sincere thanks to Mr. Charles Whibley for his constant advice and assistance. I am also indebted to Professor Postgate for kindly reading through the proof-sheets.

NINA CUST.



PREFACE

THE illustrious author of the *Essai de Sémantique* needs no introduction to the politer circles of ours or any other cultivated community. But the same cannot be said—and a certain feeling of humiliation must attend the acknowledgment—of the subject to which he has made his brilliant contribution. That is in no position to disdain the humblest efforts of the most insignificant contributor.

My interest in these studies is now little short of a quarter of a century old: it goes back to the year 1877, when I chose the science of meaning for the subject of a "Fellowship dissertation" at Trinity College. The investigation proved to be embarrassed by difficulties, the chief of which was the dearth of suitable materials, that the ardour of youth had not foreseen; results were not commensurate with hopes, and its prosecution had almost perforce to be abandoned for studies which promised a more immediate outcome. But the old desire still pricked in the memory, and at last, in an inaugural address at University College, London, I had the opportunity to call the attention of such as would

listen to the claims of a subject whose investigation was now more possible and very much more urgent.¹

Of that address this introduction may be called the immediate offspring. Its aims are primarily, to press upon English and English-speaking students the instant claims of this branch of linguistic inquiry; secondarily and incidentally, to offer to future inquirers such help, whether in the shape of negative criticism, or it may be of positive suggestions, as space and circumstance may allow. What I say will, I trust, be of general application, but if I keep an eye on the requirements of the students of the two classical languages, let this not be ascribed altogether to that natural bias which leads us to draw by preference from topics which fall within our daily observation. The exponents of these languages have still the chief control of our literary culture and linguistic investigation. This supremacy is not unchallenged, and it may be that it will fall; but while it lasts it is within the mark of equity to say that so great an influence demands from its possessors an equal enlightenment. I will conclude this personal explanation with a brief reference to a point on which I am particularly anxious to be clear. In the development of all sciences general statements are necessarily employed before they are in strictness justified. The convenience of provisional formulæ is great as an anchor for our ideas and a mark for our critics. Their provisional character must never be left

¹ This address, which is reprinted at the end of the present volume, was delivered in October 1896. M. Bréal's *Essai de Sémanitique* appeared in July 1897.

out of sight; and so whenever in the following pages I may assert that such and such is the case, this is to be understood as the equivalent of a statement that such and such are the hypotheses that appear best to agree with the relevant facts which have come within my own observation.

There is no need to go far for proofs that the import of the forms of speech is had in insufficient regard. The venerable theory that grammatical gender was properly a mark of sex is still widely held both here and on the Continent, and not unnaturally applied to the languages of Greece and Rome. Abroad, however, the practical influence of this theory is counteracted by the silent negative which the languages of the Continent present to its application. But in England and in America the only classification of nouns recognized by language is that according to sex, and with this therefore is gender identified.¹

Confusion of
gender and
sex.

Mark Twain may serve to show the popular conception. In his burlesque of the German genders he trades

¹ How blindly the sexual association clings to the English suffix *-ess* is exemplified in the naïve definition quoted by Prof. B. I. Wheeler, "Origin of Grammatical Gender," *Journal of Germanic Philology*, vol. ii. p. 542, "A fort is a place to keep men in, a fortress to keep women in!" Victor Hugo's biting chanson in the *Châtiments*, p. 384 (Paris, 1882), furnishes an odd parallel if, as seems not unlikely, the French suffix suggested the comparison there. Speaking of the first Napoleon, he says—

"Berlin, Vienne, étaient ses maîtresses;
Il les forçait,
Leste, et prenant les forteresses
Par le corset."

upon the assumption that gender is meaningless unless it signifies sex. "In German a young lady has no sex, while a turnip has. Think what overwrought reverence that shows for the turnip, and what callous disrespect for the girl. See how it looks in print. I translate this from a conversation in one of the best German Sunday-school books—

Gretchen. Wilhelm, where is the turnip?

Wilhelm. She has gone to the kitchen.

Gretchen. Where is the accomplished and beautiful English maiden?

Wilhelm. It has gone to the opera."¹

We need not be surprised if this jesting is incomprehensible to a German, but we may pity the straits to which the jester is reduced who cannot expose the uselessness of the gender distinctions without making them out to be something which they are not. Let us turn from a conscious humourist to unconscious ones. Adjectives, a well-known grammarian tells us, in language at the best misleading, should be regarded as substantives of wide general application, e.g. *bonus* "a good he," *bona* "a good she," *bonum* "a good thing." But *decem aureos tibi nisi* does not mean "I have sent you ten gold men," but "I have sent you ten gold pieces"; nor does *ecce, duae longae* mean "Look, two long women!" but "Look, two long galleys!"

Aristophanes in his *Birds*, 1313 sq., makes the Chorus say that soon some will be calling Cloud-Cuckoo-town πολυάνωρ: ταχὺ δὲ πολυάνωρα τὰν πόλιν καλεῖ τις ἄνθρωπος.

¹ *A Tramp Abroad*, Appendix D, p. 543 (ed. 1880).

The jest in applying an adjective only suitable to a community of men to the political aviary of the comedian's fancy is not, indeed, a grand one; but it belongs to a familiar type, and there are much worse ones in Aristophanes. We should gain nothing by following a distinguished scholar in straining the sign of gender into an indication of sex, and supposing an allusion to some unknown literary unfortunate who coupled πόλις with πολύνανωρ, forgetting that, applied to a female, the word would have the opprobrious sense "too fond of the men!"¹ Even in the time of Aristophanes there were speculators on language, who held the view that the masculine and feminine terminations were significant of sex. But the popular consciousness gave no countenance to this conception, as we may see from the amusing scene in *The Clouds*, 659 sqq., between Strepsiades and Socrates—

Socr. ἰδοὺ μάλ' αὖθις τοῦθ' ἕτερον τὴν κάρδοπον
ἄρρενα καλεῖς, θήλειαν οὔσαν; *Str.* τῷ τρόπῳ
ἄρρενα καλῶ' γὰρ κάρδοπον; *Socr.* μάλιστα γε,
ὥσπερ γε καὶ Κλεώνυμον. . .

Str. ἀτὰρ τὸ λοιπὸν πῶς με χρὴ καλεῖν; *Socr.* ὅπως;
τὴν καρδόπην ὥσπερ καλεῖς τὴν Σωστράτην.

When Aristophanes thus makes Socrates take the old Strepsiades to task for turning the *female* kneading-trough into a *male* by giving it the inflexion

¹ It is of course quite possible that Aristophanes meant to ridicule the use of πολύνανωρ in the novel sense of "crowded with people"; but if that was his purpose, whether he used the masculine δῆμος or the feminine πόλις was a matter of profound indifference.

-os,¹ he is holding up to derision the theory that the function of this inflexion was to denote a male. The methods of the ancient and modern humourist are thus seen to afford a curious contrast. Both, it is true, scout an unfamiliar conception by an appeal to popular feeling; but it is just what the American thinks self-evident that the Athenian thinks absurd.

The Roman view was similar. Even in the case of animals the sexualizing, if I may so call it, of the endings -us and -a was by no means complete. In old Latin *lupus* was a wolf; *lupus femina* (Ennius) "a she-wolf"; *lupa* "a wolf-woman," i.e. a prostitute. *Lupa* in the sense of a "she-wolf" was an innovation of the Augustan times. No doubt *porcus* was often used for a male and *porca* for a female swine; but this difference was not rooted in the terminations. Otherwise Virgil could not have used *porca* of the male, which was always sacrificed when a treaty was struck.²

¹ The stereotyped appellations *masculine* and *feminine* must be avoided if we would reproduce the meaning of the original. And similarly in v. 683 [τῶν ὀνομάτων] ἅπ' ἕρπον' ἐστὶν ἅπτα δ' αὐτῶν θήλεα, i.e. "which proper names are males' and which are females'?"

² *Aen.*, 8. 641, "caesa iungebant foedera *porca*," with Quintilian's very significant comment (8. 3, 19), "quaedam non tam ratione quam sensu iudicantur ut illud *caesa-porca*: fecit elegans *factio nominis*; quod si *porcus* fuisset, uile erat." Quintilian's meaning is that Virgil, desiring to avoid the hackneyed *porcus*, invented the new term *porca*, which his readers were to understand in the same sense, their perception guiding them to the right meaning. Compare Hor., *Carm.*, 3. 23, 4, *auida porca*. Statius, *Silvae*, 2. 1, 9, uses *orbati leones* for lionesses reft of their cubs; and Valerius Flaccus, 6. 347, has *leo* even in the singular for a lioness. And assuredly Homer felt no such difficulty as his

It is a still idle task to seek for these distinctions outside the nomenclature of the animal kingdom. At Catullus, 62. 54, "at si forte eadem est ulmo coniuncta marita," the MS. authority is divided between *marito* and *marita*, and more than one of the editors who read *marito* have coquetted with the fancy that the elm, being the husband, should have the nobler gender. The philologist will, of course, allow that Catullus may have written *marito* (which would be a substantive, "as a husband"), because its *inflexion* agreed with the inflexion of *ulmo* and the assonance so produced amused himself and his readers with a pleasing impression of concinnity. But the notion that his choice was determined by an association of sex and gender the phrase of Quintilian, "*maritum ulmum*" (*Inst.*, 8. 3, 8), is enough to disprove. The dullness, if we like to call it so, of the Roman feeling in this matter is shown by Manilius, 5. 238, "et te, Bacche, tuas¹ nubentem iunget ad ulmos," when the writer, in wedding the vine to the elm, never troubles himself over the circumstance that his synonym for the bride is the name of a male god.

But we need not wonder at the vitality of the error in students and teachers of literature when even professed

commentators have raised on *Il.* 21. 483 (addressed to Artemis), *ἐπεὶ δὲ λέοντα γυναιξὶν* | *Ζεὺς θῆκεν*; or on 17. 133, where a *λέων* (masc.) fights *περὶ ὅσιν τέκεσσι*; or 18. 318, where a *λῆς ἡυγένης* (masc.) pursues the hunter who has robbed her. The scholiast in A notes here *τὸ δὲ λέαινα νεώτερον ὄνομα*.

¹ The better manuscripts here have *tuos*. And of course *ulmus*, like some other names of trees, may have occasionally been masculine. But nothing could be more futile than to endeavour to make the gender significant in a passage like the present.

philologists are still under its spell. Prof. B. I. Wheeler, *quem honoris causa nomino*, in the article which I have already cited, while recognizing the strength of Brugmann's position,—“that the formal gender in our Indo-European languages for thousands of years was not connected with the idea of the masculine or feminine, is shown by quite unmistakable evidence,”¹—proposes (with Jacobi) to explain the growth of the feminine termination (*-ā, a, -η*) as due to the influence of the “she-form” (*sā* = Gk. *ἡ*) of the pronoun. “The *-ā* form was introduced into the adjectives (verbal noun-adjectives) of the *as*-ending to aid the precision of denotation when an object of female sex was referred to by such noun-adjective; thus *sā leuqós* yielded to *sā leuqā* or *leuqā*” [*ἡ λευκός* to *ἡ λευκή* or *λευκή*]. The assumption of the attracting power of the pronoun (article) is a legitimate one, as we may see from the passage of Aristophanes already quoted, where the innovator in language proposes to set *τὴν κάρδοπον* right by assimilating the noun to the article, not *vice versa*; though it may be doubted how far we are permitted to carry it back. But there is not the slightest evidence that I can see for assuming that *sā* (or *sī*) meant either *she* alone or *she* predominant, not *she* and *it* indifferently, as the German *sie* does now, and the English *she* did once, and if so, the assignment of certain terminations to express sex is still unexplained.²

¹ Brugmann, *On the Nature and Origin of Noun-genders in the Indo-European Languages*, I quote from the English translation. New York, 1897, p. 11.

² This is not the place to discuss the whole complicated question. But I may add that it is against Wheeler's theory that the assimilation began with verbal noun-adjectives (his example *λευκός*

I will conclude with some illustrations from modern composition. In an elegant version of a poem of Shelley the lines—

“No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother,”

are translated—

“Num rosa silvicolis tibi dis placitura videtur,
Contemnat fratrem quae soror asphodelum?”

The point of selecting flowers of different genders to harmonize with the different sex of *soror* and *fratrem* is easily caught by the modern reader; but unless I am altogether mistaken, it would have been quite lost on an ancient. In another modern rendering that I have seen, a disconsolate maiden is made, in accordance with modern sentiment, to bewail her woes to a *turda*. But a *hen thrush* would have suggested nothing to a Roman unless, it may be, the kitchen! Persius, 6. 24, “*tenues turdorum nosse salius*,”¹ of the epicure whose delicate

does not seem to be a very good one, as there is nothing very distinctively verbal about it) that the most characteristic class of verbal adjectives, e.g. *ταυράς*, resisted the assimilation down to classical times. The explanation of the origin of the neuter gender as developed out of the object accusative seems, on the other hand, very plausible. Its acceptance would remove a difficulty out of the way of supporters of the new theory of gender propounded by Dr. J. G. Frazer in the *Fortnightly Review* of January 1900 (pp. 78 sqq.), viz. that masculine and feminine names of things go back to a time when language was modified according as the speaker was a man or a woman.

¹ It does not follow that these versions are necessarily faulty because they are not true to the classic norm. The modern who aims at making his version conform in all respects to ancient canons sets himself an impossible task.

palate can distinguish between the flavour of hen- and cock-thrushes.

Yet another question is raised by the passage of the *Birds* which we have already discussed. *πῶλιν* Personifications and sex. *φιλάνωρ* stands for no person but for a personification; and the question arises, what is the composition of these make-believes, and how far does the notion of sex enter into it? For the ancients I think the answer must be "but slightly," even to the crude materialism of the Roman. "Mens bona, *si qua dea es* tua me in sacraria dono," writes Propertius of one of these hypo-statized abstractions, and the doubt is significant. When the Fetial began his solemn formula of reclamation, "audi Iuppiter! audite fines (cuiuscumque gentis sunt nominat)! audiat fas!" (Livy, i. 32, 6), the personality in "righteousness" is clearly appealed to in the adjuration; but all beyond is undefined. Whether these beings clothe themselves to the consciousness of language with attributes more specifically human depends not so much upon language as upon art. "Segnius irritant animum demissa per aures | quam quae sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus."

Our subject has now brought us close to the confines of what is perhaps the most bewildering department of human inquiry—the chaotic realm of mythology. The mythologist may have, as he should have, at his command all the resources of archaeology, history, and geography; but he will often go sadly wrong unless he also holds the linguistic clue, and can penetrate with clear vision to the facts that lie beyond the dædal fabric of speech. That a strict and rigorous

investigation of literary and linguistic data may throw light upon what otherwise would be tangled and obscure, may perhaps be shown by the investigation of a single point in the myth of Cerberus.

It is well known that on the number of this creature's heads there is no agreement among authorities.

In general he is allotted a comparatively modest number, varying from one, as on an ancient

The
heads of
Cerberus.

Argive bowl figured in O. Immisch's article in Roscher's *Lexikon*, p. 1121, to two, as on old Attic vases, and three, his normal allowance both in literature and art. But, on the other hand, we find him with the monstrous totals of fifty (Hesiod) and a hundred (Pindar). This contradiction becomes acute when we find the same writer apparently representing him now with three heads and now with a hundred. In our texts of Horace we read at *Carm.*, III. 11, 15 sqq.—

"Cessit immanis tibi blandienti
Ianitor aulae
Cerberus, quamuis furiale centum
Muniant angues caput eius atque
Spiritus taeter saniesque manet
Ore trilingui."¹

but at *Carm.*, II. 13, 34—

"Demittit atras belua centiceps •
Aures et intorti capillis
Eumenidum recreantur angues."

The confrontation of these two passages raises at once

¹ The words *eius atque* are corrupt, as the appearance of *eius* in an Horatian lyric shows; and Bentley proposed for them *exeatque*. The real correction is not certain, but this does not matter to our present argument.

a question whose resolution belongs to the science of meaning. Could a well-known mythological figure like that of Cerberus have presented itself to the conception of the same people, now with three and now with a hundred heads? Is such a fluctuation conceptually possible? The difficulty is only evaded by pronouncing the Sapphic stanza to be spurious, as Immisch, following many Horatian scholars, does. The hundred-headedness of the Hound of Hell is too widely certified to be cut away by the critical knife. So other expedients are tried. The testimony of Hesiod, *Theogony*, 311, Κέρβερον ὠμηστήν, Ἄλδew κύνα, χαλκεόφωνον | πεντηκοντακάρηνον, is whittled away by the explanation, that the number ought not to be pressed, οὐκ ἀριθμητικῶς ἀλλ' ἀντὶ τοῦ πολυκέφαλος, which is quoted from a comment of a scholiast at Pindar, *Pyth.* 1, 31, upon the hundred heads of Typhoeus. The expression is asserted to be no representation of the popular belief and ascribed to poetical licence.¹ Poetical perversity, we ought rather to call it, which takes a popular concept and confounds it by turning *three* into *fifty*.²

¹ "By 'fifty-headed,' which perhaps expresses an indefinite number, later poets gave the epithet *πεντηκράνους*" (Paley on the above cited place of Hesiod's *Theogony*).—"Ein dichterischer Ausdruck—keine Vorstellung des Volksglaubens, was für diese älteste Stelle namentlicher Erwähnung des K. wohl zu bewahren und schon hier scharf zu betonen ist." (Immisch, Roscher's *Lexikon*, l.c.)

² It must be pointed out that Hesiod's words assume that a "fifty-headed" Cerberus was no stranger to his audience; otherwise he would have expressed himself in this sense,—"You think, my friends, that Cerberus has three heads, but I must tell you that he has fifty." As it is conceivable an objector might say that he

Previous discussions have been lax enough, it is true, but still they have recognized, albeit dimly, the real issue. "Is the numerical discrepancy essential or unessential?" And to this we will accordingly now address ourselves.

There is no gulf fixed between mythological concepts and other concepts. My conception of any serpent which I have never seen but believe to exist, does not differ fundamentally from my conception of the sea-serpent in whose existence I disbelieve completely. Now to all concepts there is no quality so vital as that of clearness or vividness of conception. For this it is necessary that there should be no uncertainty about its essential parts. I shall accordingly start with the two propositions that to the ancients the dog Cerberus was a clear concept, and that of this the dog's head (or heads) was an essential part.

Of these two propositions no proof need be furnished. But it may be urged that the *number* of heads was unessential, in other words, that the dog might be conceived now with three heads, now with fifty or a hundred, without injury to the clearness of the general conception. Now if the Greeks, like some savage tribes, had been unable to count above two, and regarded all beyond as confused plurality, the position would be tenable. A concept which thus varied between three and a hundred, would not indeed be a clear concept, but it would be as clear as the circumstances allowed. But this is not so.

does, and this is why πεντηκοντακέφαλον appears at the *beginning* of the line, it may be rejoined that it could occupy no other position.

Between three and a hundred or fifty there was for the ancients, as for us, a conceptual break. Accordingly I infer that under these different statements lies more than a mere numerical discrepancy. There is something further to consider. Cerberus was a very terrible monster. So is a creature with three dog's heads; there is a head to menace you at every turn. But increase their number, and he loses his terrors and becomes simply foolish and ineffective. We should pause then before we make Horace import into a solemn picture of the world below the figure of a quadruped with a bush of heads simultaneously dropping two hundred ears.

The monstrous beings to whom a multitude of heads is assigned appear to be the following—Typhoeus (one hundred according to Hesiod and Pindar); the giants Ægeon (Briareus), Gyas, and Cottos (fifty heads and one hundred hands each according to Hesiod); Scylla (twelve according to Homer); Hydra (nine according to Alcæus, fifty according to Simonides, Palæphatus and Virgil (*Aen.*, 6. 576), one hundred according to Diodorus, Ovid, Euripides (*Herc. Fur.*, 1190), and others, while, according to Euripides, *ib.* 419, it is *μυρίακρον*). Here too there is obvious numerical discrepancy, but it is unessential. The numbers given exceed the limit of ready visualizing, they all include too many units to be counted at a glance; and therefore all may stand as signs of indefinite multitude.

Now what have these monsters in common? It is their *snaky* character. Not only Hydra, who has “a hundred snaky heads” (Eur., *Phoen.* 1135, with the

Scholiast), but Scylla, on whose twelve σμερδαλέαι κεφαλαί with three rows of teeth set on twelve long and flexible necks the Scholiast well observes, κατὰ μὲν τοὺς πολλοὺς κυνός· πιθανώτερον δὲ δράκοντος· καὶ γὰρ μόνος δράκων τρεῖς στίχους ἔχει ὀδόντων; and the Giants, whose snaky arms, legs, or heads have long embarrassed mythologists. It would thus be a natural inference that "many-headedness" was connected with snaky characteristics; but more, it can also be shown that it was so associated by the Greek mind itself. Pindar, *Pyth.*, 12. 20 sqq., describing the πολυκέφαλος νόμος, tells us that it was an imitation of the cry that issued from the snake-covered head of Euryale when her sister-Gorgon Medusa was killed.

This snaky character is shown by more than one indication in Cerberus. He is the son of Typhon and Echidna, Soph., *Tr.*, 1099. He is called ἐχιδναῖον δακετόν by Callimachus, *Fr.*, 161, and snakes are mentioned in connexion with him in more than one passage. In matters of evidence great weight attaches to indirect corroborations, and these we do not lack. In the *Wasps* (1029 sqq.), Aristophanes compares himself to Hercules in that he did not attack mannikins (ἄνθρωπίσκοις) but monsters, τοῖσι μεγίστοις ἐπιχειρεῖν θρασέως ξυστάς εἶθ' ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ τῷ καρχαρόδοντι οὗ δεινόταται μὲν ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν Κύννης ἀκτῖνες ἔλαμπον, ἑκατὸν δὲ κύκλῳ κεφαλαὶ κολάκων οἰμωξομένων ἐλιχμῶντο περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν· φωνὴν δ' εἶχεν χαράδρας ὄλεθρον τετοκύναις. It can hardly be doubted that the comedian is comparing his victory over Cleon to Hercules' capture of Cerberus (αὐτῷ τῷ καρχαρόδοντι, the

standing epithet of the dog). But assurance is riveted by *Knights*, 1030, compared with 1017 (and also *Peace*, 312), where Cleon is called explicitly κύρα Κέρβερον. Round the head¹ of this metaphorical Cerberus play a hundred heads of cursed parasites. The verb chosen, ἐλιχμῶντο, makes the picture unmistakable: it is the one most proper of the darting and flickering of the serpent's tongue.² This, then, is the solution of the mystery, and Cerberus has his dog's head or heads never reckoned at more than three, and his snake's heads, which are too numerous to be counted at a glance. The "belua centiceps" of Horace, *Carm.* 2. 13, 34, is the same Cerberus whose "furiale caput" "centum muniant angues" in the supposed interpolation of *Carm.* 2. 11. The very epithet *atras* suggests the snake, and as if to leave no loophole for doubt, there is a final touch to the picture, "Eumenidum recreantur angues." In the suspected passage the triple dog's head appears; the monster's mouths are open, and show the saliva dripping from all his three tongues. Horace is in perfect accord with his contemporary, Virgil, *Aen.*, 6. 417, "Cerberus hinc ingens latratu regna trifauci | personat," the three open barking throats with (later on) the erected snake heads, "*horrere uidens iam colla*

¹ I translate the singular κεφαλὴν. But we must not press it to mean that the comedian conceived of Cerberus as single-headed. See Seneca, *Herc.* (quoted below), where *trina capita* is immediately followed by *sordidum caput*. The head of Cerberus is whatever his ruff or collar of snakes surrounds.

² Bentley proposed γλῶσσαι here and in *Peace*, 756, where the passage is repeated. But no change is needed.

colubris."¹ And to turn to art, on the Argive bowl already mentioned is a graphic representation of the monster, where he is represented as a dog with active snaky heads and necks erected from various parts of his body.²

Some of my readers may not unnaturally desire to get rid of the discrepancy about the number of the dog's heads as well. The single and the double head seem to be found only in art, and so lie outside our immediate

¹ I cannot claim for my interpretation of the second place in Horace that it is new, though I hit upon it independently. It is, in fact, as old as the Scholiasts, Acron and Porphyrius, or *Belua centiceps* (i. 13, 34), "Cerberum dixit propter multitudinem anguium qui in capite eius eminebant," and has been advocated more or less timidly by one or two scholars. But this very fact was another reason for a re-examination of the case, as it showed how little weight has evidence when it has to combat false theory and erring method. I subjoin some further references to passages in ancient literature which vouch for the conception of Cerberus which I have been maintaining. Lygdamus (Tibullus, iii.), 4, 87 sq., "nec canis anguina redimitus terga caterua | cui tres sunt linguae tergeminiunq; caput." (Lygdamus, who frequently imitates Horace, is very probably expanding him here.) Seneca, *Herc.*, 787 sqq., "Stygius canis | qui trina uasto capita (latera, R. Peiper) concutiens sono | regnum tuetur, sordidum tabo caput | lambunt colubrae, uiperis horrent iubae, | —ecce latratu graui | loca muta terret, sibilat totos minax | *serpens per armos.*" Val. Fl., 3. 227 sq., "ast illum fluiis et nocte remersum (so I would read for *remensa*) | Eumenidum canis et *sparsae* iuba reppulit *hydrae*" (i. e. Cerberus with his hydra-like mane of snakes).

² The hundred serpent heads may be found in another Augustan poet, if an ingenious conjecture of A. Palmer's be right. In Tibullus, i. 3, 71 sq., he proposed "tunc niger in porta *per centum* Cerberus ora | stridet et aeratas excubat ante fores" for "*serpentum*—ore." *Stridet*, "hisses," does not require the addition of *serpentum* to make its reference clear: cf. Sil. It., 6. 176, "tempestat oritur, mixtam *stridore* procellam | *Cerberco* torquens," "with the hissing of Cerberus's snakes."

province. Immisch says that "considering the difficulty of the representation for primitive art we must not consider the fluctuation decisive, but that to ascribe it *only* to technical grounds is impossible." A difference in the representation of Cerberus at *different periods* or in *different schools* of art of course involves no self-contradiction in the conception, and the double head seems to belong to old Attic, and the triple head (according to a conjecture of Furtwängler) to old Ionic art. But still there is something to account for. Let us hazard a conjecture. May not the double head of the κῡων "Aΐδου, the *ianitor Orci*, whose duty it was to keep the threshold of the lower world from being trespassed on from either side, be compared to the double aspect of the god of the doorway, upon which his triple head is a later refinement to symbolize the *τροόδος* or forking of the ways, the one leading to Elysium and the other to Tartaros? ¹

Before leaving the subject of mythology, I should like to cite another case in which the Greek mythologer's treatment has been much too lax, the alleged confusion of the Water-nymphs and the Tree-nymphs, which I have discussed in *American Journal of Philology*, xvii. pp. 30-44, xviii. pp. 75-6.

The study of meaning will revise not a few of our grammatical notions; and in no department of linguistics perhaps is this revision more needed. Here, it is true, the logician has lost much of his former power; but the influence of the pedagogue

¹ Plato, *Gorgias*, p. 524 A, ἐν τῇ τροόδῳ ἐξ ἧς φέρεται τὰ ὁδοὶ ἢ μὲν εἰς μακάρων νῆσους ἢ δ' εἰς Τάρταρον.

is almost wholly unimpaired. Nothing is so hard to shake off as the old associations of the school-room; and pedagogy, not content with its early dominance, invades the territory of science, whose discoveries it seeks to discredit on the ground that they cannot be taught!¹ *nil sine magno uita labore dedit mortalibus*, and it is unfortunately true that what is most troublesome to teach is often most instructive to learn. The practice of acquiring a foreign tongue through the medium of one's native one is no doubt a convenient one, but it leaves its mark on all after study. Because *que*, *re* are usually translated *and* in English, a very distinguished scholar writes that "accuracy of scholarship is checked from the outset when a boy turns up his dictionary and finds one of the meanings given for *que* is *or*." It would seem, however, that real and intelligent appreciation of the ancient language is just beginning when a boy discovers that *que* cannot be translated mechanically by *and*, and that a Roman who was contemplating two alternatives was, unlike ourselves, free to view them either simultaneously (*que*) or successively (*ue*).² We may dislike the Latin use as shocking our

¹ I have elsewhere protested against this noxious fallacy (*Classical Review*, 1899, p. 68). So I will only say here, better teach nothing than what is not true. But we are not reduced to this dilemma. The practice may be taught and the theory reserved. Our classical teaching concerns itself too little with the living plant and too much with the desiccated specimen.

² I refer to the use of *que* in passages like Virgil, *Georg.*, 3. 120 (of a horse), "quamuis saepe fuga uersos ille egerit hostes | et patriam Epirum referat fortisque Mycenae," the horse could not have been born both in Epiros and Mycenæ. For some inscrutable

native ineradicable notions of *or* and *and*; but to refer it to the English translation is the merest irrelevance.¹

The greater simplicity of English syntax, which is often only another way of saying its greater ambiguity, is well known to all Greek and Latin students. But occasionally even English has discriminations which they cannot render. The distinction, apparently doomed to disappear,² between "if it *is* necessary" and "if it *be* necessary" is such a one; and it is noticeable how often it proves a stumbling-block to student and commentator.

Few can have failed to observe how potently these imperfect abstractions, which we call grammatical rules, work in the brain. And as if this were not enough, we must needs conjure up the sheeted phantoms of normal standard and of purity of style to dull still further our appreciation of the living speech. It is almost painful to read in the pages of an eminent grammarian how often the usages of Livy and Sallust are *peu correctes*. A

reason this particular cavil is regarded in more than one quarter as a mark of high scholarship. On a similar use of *et* compare Professor W. M. Ramsay's protest in the *Classical Review*, 1898, p. 337.

¹ It is, in fact, nothing but an instance of the popular view of language cropping up to the surface. How ineradicable is the notion that there is no finality or authority in the expressions of ideas outside those of our mother-tongue, has never been more clearly shown than by the anecdotes in F. Polle's entertaining little book, *Wie denkt das Volk über die Sprache*, ch. ii., e.g. the memorable utterance of a German from among the common folk—"Im Deutschen heisst das Brot *Brot* und ist auch Brot; im Französischen heisst es *pain* und ist auch weiter nichts als *Brot*." We might thus paraphrase for the English reader—"In English bread is called *bread*, and it *is* bread. In French it is called *pain*, and it's only bread after all."

² Cf. Sweet, *New English Grammar*, §§ 2272, 2274.

distinguished living philologist, whom no one could accuse of slavish adherence to convention, calls the sentence "The captain with three of his men were taken prisoners," "ungrammatical." As a direction to a school-boy the word might do; but scientific grammar should have avoided it as passing an irrelevant imputation upon an idiom found in more than one cultivated speech.¹

"Grammar" pushes language very hard when, as happens not so very rarely, the only available expression is stigmatized as "ungrammatical."²

I find the following stanza in a poem called "The Haunted Czar," in Harriet E. H. King's *Ballads of the North*—

"Did not God make us, I and thou?
Have pity even for His sake.
My hair is blanched upon my brow,
At every rose's fall I shake."

What is the unfortunate writer to do? *I and thou* is 'ungrammatical,' and *me and thee* would be ridiculous.

Of course we do not deny that the *reproach* which the word conveys may be deservedly applied, as when no reason is observable for the deviation from common usage or only an excuse of metre or rhyme. But linguistic science concerns herself primarily with what is, and not with what should be, said, and at the very first sound of 'solecistic,' 'ungrammatical,' and the like she must be awake and on her guard. They are the creakings of Procrustes' bed.

¹ In Latin, Livy, 26. 46, 8, "in quam Mago cum omnibus armatis *refugerant*," and elsewhere, even in Cicero; and (though not so frequently) in Greek, Thuc., 3. 109, Δημοσθένης μετὰ τῶν συστρατηγῶν Ἀκαρνάνων σπένδονται. It is also found in Middle High German.

² O. Riemann, *Syntaxe Latine*, passim.

If we seek for the chief differences in the expression of thought and emotion between ancient and modern speech, we shall find them to reside not so much in the mental vocabulary, if I may call it *epirrhemēs*, so, but in the mental syntax. The contrasts which ancient and modern *rhemes* present are great and startling; but there is a more fundamental diversity in their treatment of the *epirrhemēs*.¹ It breaks into light directly we attempt to translate either from Greek or Latin. In their expression of relations between ideas these ancient languages use media holding in solution elements which we know only as precipitates, and whose true character will continue to escape us, unless, in despite of that use which is second nature, we resolutely refuse to apply to them the re-agents of our own mental constitution. The neuter nominative and accusative were once, we know, but a single case; and who can tell exactly when they ceased to be such?² Greek grammar is often at a loss to say in which light the ambiguous form should be regarded. In *Electra*, 74, τὸ σὸν μελέσθω βάντι φρουρῆσαι χρέος, is τὸ σὸν . . χρέος, subject to μελέσθω, or object to φρουρῆσαι? If Sophocles rose from the dead, could he tell us? A modern reader, however, will not be

¹ For the explanation of these necessary novelties in terminology see below, p. 329.

² This appears to be the reason why the neuter of the participle, used impersonally, chooses the acc. nom. rather than the genitive, which is preferred in personal constructions, and it appears to go some way towards accounting for some striking discrepancies in usage, e.g. δόξαν ταῦτα (Plato, Xenophon) by the side of δόξαντα ταῦτα (Andocides, Xenophon), and Euripides, αἰαὶ δέδοται, πρέσβυ, τλήμονες φυγαί.

happy till he knows. How many times are we jarred by finding, as we think, antithesis when we expected correspondence, as with the accusatives in Sophocles, *Œdipus Coloneus*, 1685 sqq., πῶς γὰρ ἢ τιν' ἀπ' ἁπλαν γᾶν ἢ πόντιον κλύδωνα ἀλώμεναι δύσοιστον ἔξομεν τροφάν; "for how shall we find our bitter livelihood, roaming to some far land, or on the waves of the sea" (Jebb's translation); or with the passive inflexions in Ovid, *Trist.*, 3. 7, 47, "ingenio tamen ipse meo comitorque fruorque," and Martial, 7. 5, 5 sq., "tuoque | terretur uultu barbarus et fruitur," where the only way in which we can attempt to reproduce the formal correspondence is to turn into a passive a verb which was active as early as Plautus.

Some may perhaps think this 'poetical freedom.' Then what of prose? Open Cicero anywhere, and you will not read far before coming upon passages like the following: "si haec non gesta audiretis sed picta uideretis, tamen appareret uter esset insidiator, uter nihil cogitaret mali," *pro Milone*, § 54. Observe the formal antithesis in the two participles *gesta*—*picta*, and notice how Cicero glides unconsciously from one sense of the participle to another.¹ He continues, "cum alter ueheretur in raeda paenulatus, una sederet uxor—quid horum non impeditissimum, uestitus an uehiculum an comes? quid minus promptum ad pugnam, cum paenula inretitus, raeda impeditus, uxore paene constrictus esset." Observe

¹ We might translate, 'If you only saw these things as painted and did not hear them as they were done.' The craft of the orator in turning the ambiguities of language to account, and suggesting, without appearing to do so, that he is giving a statement of *fact* is worth attention.

how the participle-adjective *impeditus* is first applied to the *causes* of the "impedition" (*impeditissimum* of *vehiculum*, etc.), and immediately, after to the person who is its object. Note again the slide in the *quid* from the actual external objects (*vestitus*, etc.) to the circumstances, "*quid minus promptum ad pugnam cum.*" And then consider how all this is to be rendered.

Compare the indeterminateness of the subject in Livy, 26. 19, 8 sq., of the miraculous stories current about Scipio Africanus—"Multa eiusdem generis alia uera, alia adsimulata, admirationis humanae in eo iuvene excesserant modum, quibus freta tunc ciuitas aetati haud maturae tantam rerum molem tantumque imperium permisit," where the *multa* seem to change their character with *excesserant*, being now merged in the feeling which Scipio excited among his fellow citizens, instead of being the external ground for that feeling, as before (and after in *quibus freta*—*civitas permisit*).¹ To say that the problems of interpretation which underlie passages like the above are beyond our solution is true, but far from the full truth. Their very statement eludes us.

Of the ever-widening rift between ancient and modern forms of language, the disappearance of a
Dead
"figures
of speech." number of the figures of speech is another proof. Enallage, Hypallage, Prolepsis, Zeugma,

¹ If Livy had been able to use the passive of *excedere* he might have expressed his meaning by writing '*multa—fecerunt ut admirationis humanae in eo iuvene excederetur modus.*' Although he was so young, much had combined to make him the object of more admiration than falls to the share of man.'

Hendiadys, the ἀπὸ κοινοῦ construction, Hyperbaton, Hysteron proteron, are all dead or dying.

The much-quoted "he pitched into the room and then into the lawyer" is grotesque, because language no longer permits of such elastic couplings; ^{Zeugma.} but "domum simul aduocatumque inuasit" would have seemed to a Roman, and should seem to all who would appreciate Latin, the most natural thing in the world. The cause of the repetition of the pronoun in French phrases like 'je te remercie et te serre la main,' is, as Prof. Bréal tells us (p. 51, *infra*), to be sought in the Latin; but its continued vitality is due to the sharpening of the sense, that different relations of objects must be differently, or at least separately, expressed.

Nothing is stranger to the modern feeling than the derangement of epithets or parts of epithets with which ancient poetry swarms; *e.g.* ὄγκον ^{Enallage.} δυνάματος μητρῶον, "the weight of the name of mother" (Sophocles); ἐπτατείχεις ἐξόδους, "the seven exits from the walls" (Æschylus); "Tyrrenusque tubæ clangor" (Virgil).¹

Allied to this is a use of the vocative of adjectives for which Plato furnishes instructive examples. When in his lively dialogue he uses ὦ θανμάσιε ^{Irrational Vocatives.} ὦ μακάριε and the like, this by no means always imports that the persons so addressed have anything surprising or blissful about them. It may merely mean that the

¹ Even mature scholarship is misled by these "enallages." "The interpolation in Hor., *Odes*, 3. 11, 17 sqq., most strangely ascribes to him a single head with an *os trilingue*," says the author of the article *Kerberos* in Roscher's *Lexicon*. See above, p. xxii.

emotion excited by some other object attaches itself in its expression to the vocative. Thus ὦ θαυμάσιε Κράτυλε Cratylus 439 only indicates the speaker's, Socrates', "intense interest in the mystery of the ideas" (Campbell, *Theaetetus*, Appendix B). In *Theaetetus*, p. 151 C, πολλοὶ γὰρ ἤδη, ὦ θαυμάσιε, πρὸς με οὕτω διετέθησαν ὥστε ἀτεχνῶς δάκνειν ἔτοιμοι εἶναι, the address simply expresses the astonishment of Socrates at having awakened so much hostility. 'You may be surprised to learn,' we should say, but with much weaker effect 'that some have actually been ready to bite me!' "It can hardly be rendered except by a note of admiration" (Campbell, *ib.*).¹ Contrast the cold-blooded way in which Ovid, *Ars. Am.* 1. 145, 'cuius equi ueniant facito studiose requiras,' and *ib.* 2. 254, 'iunge tuas ambitiose manus,' uses the vocative to obtain the short vowel endings of which Latin poetry felt so much the want. But for the quantity, we could hardly help taking *studiose*, *ambitiose* to be adverbs.

In a stage of language when shifts like these are possible, it is not surprising that the "forms" ^{"Attraction."} often appear to master the "form," and cause a contradiction to arise between what is said and what is signified, as in the widely extended phenomena of Attraction.² Here where the sense was clear the

¹ For the tendency of emotional expression to diffuse itself irrationally compare Polle, *op. cit.* pp. 25 sqq.

² I mean real attraction, not cases like "in quo numero," which is often said to be for "in quorum numero," though the genitive is a later exactness.

words were allowed a free course, with "irrationality" as the result.¹

Thus in Sophocles, *Ed. Col.*, 1321-2, Παρθενοπαῖος . . . ἐπώνυμος τῆς πρόσθεν ἀδμήτης χρόνῳ | μητρὸς λοχευθείς, "named from the birth of one who so long a virgin became a mother at last," the expression, unintelligible in itself, may be disentangled by observing firstly, that for the verbal and semi-abstract phrase, ἐπώνυμος τοῦ . . . λοχευθῆναι, Sophocles substitutes the nominal and concrete one, τῆς—λοχευθείσης (a predicative use familiar to Latin and not so strange to Greek as some suppose); and secondly, that the feminine participle (which was metrically inconvenient) became the masculine, with a shift of meaning from middle (λοχεύομαι, "bring forth") to passive. Here the "irrationality" is glaring; but it is just as real in Lucan, 8. 315 sqq., "sed cuncta *reuoluens* | uitae fata meae, semper uenerabilis illa | orbis parte fui." Only we glide over it, as we do not realize the value of inflexions which we do not possess, and render *reuoluens* by the caseless incoherent English participle. Lucan's meaning, "Turning over all the experiences of my life (I find) I have always been respected in that part of the world," is clear; but it is not in his words, which can hardly be analyzed, though I should conjecture they are the bastard offspring of a union between

¹ The confusion which attraction works when allied ideas (*e.g.* those of *age* and *time*) are not clearly discriminated, may be studied in the Latin expressions for *old*, *older*, etc., which are collected in Madvig's *Bemerkungen*, pp. 85, 86, or Roby's *Latin Grammar*, II. § 1273.

revolventi and *fui*, as the past of *sum* in the sense of *videor*.¹

These and many other phenomena become intelligible when we treat the ancient sentence as a whole. Hysteron proteron. A whole it was in a very different sense to that of our modern sentence, with its fixity of order and its intolerance of anything like complexity of construction. Our modern critics are unduly sensitive on the subject of unusual order, especially in verse. Not so long ago a heroic attempt was made to expunge *hysteron proteron*² from the roll of grammatical figures. The definition attacked was that given in B. H. Kennedy's *Public School Latin Grammar*: "hysteron proteron is, when of two things that which naturally comes first is mentioned last, as *moriāmur et in media arma ruāmus*." The attack succeeded in so far as it exposed the inappropriateness of the adverb *naturally*, for which *usually* would have been better, and directed attention to the preference of poets for the side-by-side construction of clauses; (in other words hendiadys in sentences: there is no difference in principle between '*breuia et Syrtēs*,' the shallow Syrtēs, *Aen.* l. 115, and '*progeniem sed enim Troiano a sanguine duci* | *audierat Tyrias olim quae*

¹ A very similar incoherence is found in Pliny, *N. H.*, 32, § 144 (in an enumeration of marine animals), "*fibri quorum generis lūtras nusquam mari accepimus mergi, tantum marina dicentes*." The words in italics have nothing to do in time or in sense with "*lūtras nusquam meri accepimus mergi*," they give the major premiss, 'We treat only of marine animals,' to which "*lūtras—mergi*" is the minor, 'We know of no instances of marine *lūtrae*.' The conclusion, "we omit the *lūtrae*," is left out.

² *Classical Review*, 1894, p. 203 sq.

uerteret arces, | *hinc populum late regem belloque superbum*
| *uenturum excidio Libyae,* *Aen.* i. 23 sqq., where the description of the Roman people is divided between the two sentences.) But it left unexplained why, when you had got your co-ordinate clauses, *they* were placed in an unusual order, and it wholly neglected the influence of metre. All readers of English poetry are aware of the paucity of the rhymes in our language, and when they reach the end of a verse, know better than to inquire too closely into the perfect appropriateness of the rhyming words. They give, and the rhymers takes, as of right, a certain liberty in this part of the verse.¹

It was quantity that was the trouble of the ancient muses, and its yoke was especially heavy on the Roman. Even in the freer rhythm of oratory its claims were exigent. Cicero finds it necessary to point out to his contemporaries that flagrant trajections of words are not to be used, "*quo melius aut cadat aut uoluatur oratio*" (*Orator*, § 229). The Roman orator who used these trajections was no more ignorant than ourselves that thoughts were to be set out in the order in which they should be presented to the mind, and he deviated from this order more or less consciously. And the same is true of the Roman poets. Compare *Ibis*, 125 sq., "*luctatusque diu cruciatos deserat artus | spiritus et longa torqueat ante mora,*" where the compromise, "*deserat—torqueat ante,*" has the effect of a half-apology to the reader.

¹ "Without rhyme *or* reason" runs the popular phrase; and the distinction is charged with unconscious satire.

The particular kind of trajection which transports a word from its proper clause to one with which it has no concern, *e.g.* Horace, *Serm.*, 1. 5, 71, "sedulus hospes | paene *macro*s arsit dum turdos uersat in igni," is still more shocking to the modern sense. The language even of recognition shows how difficult is their appreciation. Surprise has been expressed that the ancients, lacking our system of punctuation, could understand such an arrangement of words at all. The wonder is natural but misplaced, nor is anything gained by sowing caltrops over the Latin page after the following fashion: Ovid, *Fasti*, 3. 383 sq., "Mamurius, morum fabraene exactior artis, | difficile est, illud, dicere, clausit opus."¹ The ancients, and perhaps we may say especially the Romans, had a control over the framework of language of which we have but a faint conception: this is shown not only by the elaborateness of the 'period,' and the subtlety by which an antithesis was indicated by a mere juxtaposition of the contrasted sentences, but by the capacity, sometimes we may think abused, of holding a disciplined attention in suspense until, with the addition of the last element, be it word or sentence, the circuit is completed, and intelligence flashes over all the connecting wires.²

¹ I regret that I have sometimes myself adopted this ugly and confusing practice, as at Catullus, 66. 18, where, when we have chopped our line to pieces thus—"non, ita me diui, uera gemunt iuerint," we have still to fit them together again.

² I do not of course deny that modern languages can hold a construction in suspense. But, speaking generally, modern languages plan their sentences from the beginning, not from the end; ancient ones from both.

The sentences already quoted illustrates this for words. Horace, *Epistles*, I. 15, 1 sqq., is an example of a sentence which, with two parentheses of eleven and six lines respectively, extends over twenty-five hexameters without falling into anacoluthon.

The same thing is evidenced by what we may call the "inverted ἀπὸ κοινοῦ construction," where a word—most commonly an epithet—has to be supplied from the following context. The beginner finds no difficulty in understanding that in *bonae messes et uites* the goodness is to be applied twice; nor again in *bonae messes et uina*, for he easily overlooks the difference in gender. But it is a real effort to him, and often to his teacher, to learn that in "*messes et bona uina date*" (Tibullus, I. 1, 24) the meaning is exactly the same.

To turn to another trifle, as some may think it, the perplexing doubt which we often feel as to when to use a capital first letter for a certain class of nouns in Greek and Latin is not a mere chimera; it corresponds to a real indeterminateness in the ancient rheme. It arises both in the case of "common" names which have been specialized in a "proper" meaning, and of "proper" names which have assumed a "common" one; it affects *Venus*, the goddess of physical charm, once a neuter substantive like *genus* (compare *venus-tus* with *onus-tus*), *Amor*, *Spes*,¹ and other abstracts imperfectly deified, and *Bacchus* and *Ceres*, godheads reduced to the rank of substances.

¹ For the wavering between *Spes* and *spes* cf. Tibullus, 2. 6, 19—28; Ovid, *ex Ponto*, 1. 6, 27 sqq.

Ovid thus describes the mythical transformation of the town of Ardea, *Met.* 14, 573 sqq.—
Ardea
 and *ardea*.

“cedit Ardea Turno

sospite dicta potens quam postquam Dardanus ignis
 abstulit et tepida latuerunt tecta fauilla,
 congerie e media tum primum cognita praepes
 subuolat et cineres plausis euerberat alis.
 et sonus et macies et pallor et omnia captam
 quae deceant urbem, nomen quoque mansit in illa
 urbis, ET IPSA SUIS DEPLANGITUR ARDEA PENNIS.”

To blind faith no doubt the grotesque miracle itself might still be possible; but the picture of the last line it is beyond the capacity of the modern imagination to visualize. *Ardea* and *ardea* can no longer be merged in one: in thought no more than in typography.¹

By the side of this cohesion of “proper” and
 Name “common” names may be observed a similar
 and Thing phenomenon in the conception of name and
 “thing.” In Plautus, *Pseudolus*, 35, the slave who is
 reading a letter written on the customary waxen tablets
 says to his master, pointing to the name *Phoenicium*

¹ When, to venture on a translation, Ovid says “HERON beats its wings in mourning for itself,” he is not indulging in a bold metaphor like Dante’s in *Inferno*, c. 26 init. “Godi, Firenze, poi che sei sì grande | che per mare e per terra batti l’ali,” “Rejoice, Florence, since thou art so great that over land and sea thou beatest thy wings,” nor crudely, as we should say, confusing the literal with the metaphorical, as at *ex Ponto*, 2. 5, 38, when he speaks of a man’s mind (*pectora*) being ‘fair’—‘fairer than milk or untrodden snow’; but he is forcing us in a professed picture of fact to dwell upon an impossible transformation.

which is before him, "Tuam amicam uideo, Calidore." Calidorus looks round with the question, "Ubi east, opsecro?" To which Pseudolus replies, "*Eccam* in tabulis porrectam: in ~~ce~~^{ca} cubat." With us the joke falls flat, because the bonds of association between the written name and the living person are but weak and slight; but not so with the contemporaries of Plautus. To them nothing was more natural than the close association of name and thing. The genuine old Latin for "my name is Mercurius" is "nomen Mercurio est mihi." Towards the end of the Republic the nominative was creeping in from the Greek.¹

Students of the Latin poet Propertius will remember a peculiarity which arrests even a very cursory attention, and which may perhaps be explained from a similar cause. It is best seen from examples, Prop., i. 22, 6-8, "sit mihi praecipue *pulvis Etrusca* dolor; | tu proiecta mei perpessa es membra propinqui, | tu *nullo* miseri contegis ossa *solo*." In the last line the dust of Etruria (*pulvis Etrusca*) is blamed not for not covering the body (that were an intelligible figure), but for not covering it with any *solum*. Here what is substantially one idea (that of the soil) masquerades as two, and appears in the same sentence, now as the agent, now as the instrument with which the action is performed. Other writers have the same thing, though less often. We read in the *Panegyric of Messalla*, included among the works of Tibullus, 4. 1, 29 sq., "nam quamquam antiquae gentis superant tibi laudes, | non

¹ Compare Polle, *op. cit.*, pp. 122 sqq.

tua maiorum contenta est *gloria fama*." A man may be said to be satisfied with the glory of his ancestry ; but how his reputation can be no one can say.¹ Silius Italicus, 6. 176 sq., "uastoque e gurgite fusa | tempesta oritur mixtam stridore procellam | Cerbereo torquens." No conceptual line can be drawn between the "*tempestas quae torquet*" and the "*procella quae torquetur*." The same tendency is seen in the use of adjectives. In Prop., 3. 16, 30, "cingat Bassaricas Lydia mitra comas," the poet is addressing Bacchus, and he uses an epithet formed from *Bassaricus*, one of the god's attributes, instead of *tuas*. Lucan, speaking of the dream of Pompey before the battle of Pharsalia, has, 7. 9, "nam *Pompeiani* uisus sibi sede theatri | innumeram effigiem Romanae cernere plebis," where even 'in the *Pompeian* theatre' would strike us as unnatural ; and so Judge Ridley translates, "he heard | Innumerable Romans shout his name | Within *his* theatre."

It is not allowable to refer these and similar phenomena to a hankering after variety, such as we may observe now-a-days in tawdry historians and the writers of the sporting press, who, whenever they have to repeat the mention of one of their personages, must revive their jaded reader's attention by a new periphrasis. This restlessness is absent in the ancient writers, to whom it never occurred to avoid a word on the sole ground that they had just made use of it.

¹ If it be thought that *gloria* means "their glory," I would refer to Prop., 2. 7, 17, "hinc etenim meruit tantum mea *gloria* nomen," where this explanation is inadmissible.

No ; here too we must recognize that we are contemplating phenomena of a stage in language which we have left behind, and that the feeling of mental discomfort which they arouse in us is one of the results of a linguistic evolution which has developed a once imperfect differentiation of principal and accessory concepts, and thus delimited more strictly the confines of Rheme and Epirrheme. That the modern interdict marks intellectual advance can hardly be denied. Expressions like "Bacchus bound the Bassaric tresses," or "Apollo strung the Phoebean lyre," obscure the fact that the relation of the object to the subject (that of possessed to possessor) is in both cases the same, and thus confuse the perception, while the employment of two rhemes (Bacchus—Bassareus) where one is enough, weakens the effect of both, and paves the way for the disappearance of one of them.¹

To sum up, may we not say that language has to a certain extent lost the extreme ductility which arrested the attention of Cicero, 'est oratio mollis et tenera et ita flexibilis ut sequatur quocumque torqueas,' *Orator* § 52, cf. *De Or.* 3. 176, or, to change the metaphor that, while ancient compositions in their blending hues and often hazy forms recall the effects of the brush and the palette, modern ones suggest rather the definite colours and sharper outlines of work in mosaic?

¹ In the introduction to my *Select Elegies of Propertius* I adopted the term "disjunctiveness" for these phenomena. From the point of view of expression they are indeed "disjunctive," but from that of thought they are rather conjunctive.

The rule that synonyms, or quasi-synonyms, must not be used in contrasted relations is a rule of modern ^{Contrasted} speech ; but the law on which I shall now touch ^{rheme} belongs, it would seem, to language in every stage. It is that consciously contrasted rhemes must differ in outward form.

I will illustrate this from a tendency which I have observed in my own pronunciation of the word *ass*. The *a* of the small group of vocables to which *ass* belongs (*grass pass*, etc.) is, as we all know, rendered differently by different English speakers, some giving the sound of *cat*, others that which is customarily heard in *father*. The first was the pronunciation to which I was brought up, and this I naturally use in speaking of the animal, but when I have occasion to use the word metaphorically I feel impelled to give its *a* the second value. A friend to whom I mentioned this told me that he too felt the impulse to differentiate the meaning through the sound, but, as his familiar *a* was the second one, his literal *ass* would be my metaphorical one. If we were obliged to use the word in its different senses in the same context, the distinction which now seems natural would become inevitable.¹

This may seem obvious, but when an etymologist of the standing of Professor Skeat has lent countenance to a different view, it is not superfluous to state it. In his

¹ The German *schwein* must have been similarly differentiated by the swineherd whose jealousy for the honour of his hogs has furnished Dr. Polle with one of his amusing stories. "You think a pig is a pig? A pig is *not* a *pig* (ein Schwein ist kein Schwein), but a very clean beast!" (*Op. cit.* p. 52).

Etymological Dictionary of the English Language he writes "*Quean*, a contemptible woman, a hussy [E.]. In Shak., *Merry Wives*, IV. ii. 180. Absolutely the same word as *queen*, the orig. sense being 'woman.' The difference in spelling is unoriginal, but may have marked some variation of pronunciation. The best passage to illustrate this word is in *P. Plowman*, c. ix. 46, where the author says that in the grave all are alike; you cannot there tell a knight from a knave or a *queen* from a *quean*.¹ The MS. have *queyne*, *queene*, *quene*, in the former case, and *queene*, *quene* in the latter; i.e. they make no distinction, none being possible." Some may think it a pity to destroy the fancy which has amused many writers and readers of etymology that the name of the highest lady in the land is "absolutely the same" as that of "a contemptible woman, a hussy."² But the two words were for all that absolutely distinct, and until *quean* died out of our language so they must have remained; and this is proved by their occurrence in opposition not only in the passage of *Piers Plowman*, but elsewhere, e.g. Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, ii. 3—

"I never was ambitious
Of using congees to my daughter-queen.
A *queen*! perhaps a *quean*!"

¹ It is not surprising that Dr. K. Schmidt says "Auffällig ist das Fortbestehen von engl. *queen* neben *quean*," *Die Gründe des Bedeutungs wandel* (Berlin, 1894 progr.), p. 41.

² The two words are rightly separated by Mr. Mayhew in his *Old English Phonology*, § 480, p. 138 (which see), as I found after the above was written; and Professor Skeat tells me that he now regards them as separate. Of course they are from the same root, that of the Greek *γυνή*.

and Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, iii. 2, 171 sq.

The application of this principle throws valuable light upon dark or doubtful places in the history of language. When by the loss of the rough breathing and the confusion of η and υ , $\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ was no longer distinguishable from $\upsilon\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, the instinct of the Greek language set itself to revive the perishing difference between *meum* and *tuum*. And hence it comes that the modern Greek, when he wishes to put *you* in the plural, does not employ $\upsilon\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, but $\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ or $\epsilon\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$.¹ The same source furnishes irrefragable evidence that in the time of Hesiod $\omicron\iota$ had a perfectly distinct sound from ι , with which the modern Greek confuses it. For in *Works and Days*, 242, we read $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma' \epsilon\pi\acute{\eta}\gamma\alpha\gamma\epsilon \pi\eta\mu\alpha$ $\text{Κρονίων} \mid \lambda\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu \acute{\omicron}\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu \kappa\alpha\iota \lambda\omicron\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$. The same is shown for the time of Thucydides by a well-known passage (2. 54, 3), where he tells us that at the time of the Great Plague at Athens the elder men remembered and quoted an old song ($\phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\kappa\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma \dots \pi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$), $\eta\zeta\epsilon\iota \Delta\omega\rho\iota\alpha\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \pi\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\epsilon\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma$ $\kappa\alpha\iota \lambda\omicron\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\mu' \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}$, and that there was a dispute whether the word was $\lambda\omicron\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$, "pestilence," or $\lambda\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ "famine"; but that the version with $\lambda\omicron\iota\mu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ prevailed as then the more appropriate one.²

¹ This is known to those who have travelled in the country. quote from a private letter of Professor Ernest Gardner, late Director of the British School at Athens—"In spoken Greek $\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ or $\epsilon\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ is used for *you* plural, corresponding to $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}$ or $\epsilon\sigma\acute{\upsilon}$ in the singular; the accusative is sing. $\sigma\acute{\epsilon}$ or $\epsilon\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha$, plural $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ $\epsilon\sigma\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$. $\upsilon\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ is practically restricted to stilted pedantic conversation."

² See Mr. C. H. Monro's note in the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* for 1895, p. 12.

One of the most hopeful signs for the future of our science is the stricter treatment of Analogy. At the first uprising of *die neueste Sprachforschung* in the cause of rigid Phonetic law, the cry of meaning was unheard, and any analogy had to serve if it could be pressed into the service; but most of these inefficient allies have now been sent about their business.¹ Much good work has been done in the elucidation of a difficult subject, yet not a little remains to do. The respective influences of sound and sense in these analogical connections have to be more carefully defined. *Cutler* is mentally associated with *cut*; why not *butler* with *butt*?² *Cut* has nothing to do with *cutler*, *butt* and *butler* have the same origin. The answer is that *cut* is a rheme of character; *butt* (or *but*³) is not. *Cut* brings before the mind the distinct picture of an unmistakable physical action. *But* is now a rheme and now an epirrheme (the conjunction *but*); and which of its many suggestions the mind should take it is impossible without further light to determine.

In these inter-actions between rheme and rheme⁴ both

¹ E.g. the suggestion that the difference in the vowel of Greek κλόνις and that of the Lat. *clunis* was due to a popular connection between κλόνις and κλονέω. Brugmann, *Zum Heutigen Stand der Sprachwissenschaft*, pp. 70, 89 (1885), and *Grundriss*, ed. 1, p. 219 note; omitted altogether in the second edition of the *Grundriss* (1898).

² *Butler*, from Fr. *boutelier*, Lat. *buticularius* from the *buticula*, diminutive of *butis*, a cask or butt.

³ The spelling is of course perfectly immaterial.

⁴ I am not sure how far Prof. Wheeler could accept my qualification or interpretation of his "fundamental principle of language—history. . . . *The psychological grouping from which the phenomena*

sound and meaning are involved; but speaking generally, we may say it is sound that takes the ^{Sound} _{dominant} initiative, dragging meaning in its train. These changes always suppose some comparative weakness in the rheme that is affected; it is those accordingly whose meaning is most fluctuating or attenuated, which are least strongly rooted in associations of their own, that are most exposed to attack. The dominance of the sound in the transforming of strange or foreign words is very noticeable. Learning Greek before German, as I did, I felt an almost irresistible impulse to attach the sense of *κλεινός*, "glorious," to the German *klein*. I am told that those who learn German first feel that *κλεινός* ought to mean *little*. In such cases we may hope that the modification may regard the interests of sense; but there is no guarantee that it will. The English *trunk* of an elephant is a most inappropriate transformation of his *trump* or trumpet, Fr. *trompe*.¹ The Roman who saw in the same beast's *προβοσκίς* his *fly-flapper*, *promuscis*, was a little more reasonable. The transformations which have not become current are just as interesting for us and just as important. One of our college servants, referring to some orange plants which were recovering from a severe frost, observed that they had been *re-suffocated*.² A housekeeper in one of the

of analogy result is never a grouping on the basis solely of meaning, nor the basis solely of form; both are involved in every case." *Origin of Grammatical Gender*, I.c., p. 533 note.

¹ The popular transformation (it would be a compliment to call it an etymology) has, however, produced no confusion, as we do not use *trunk* of the body of quadrupeds.

² Resuscitated.

Canons' houses at Ely referred to a new Canon as 'one of them *chalybeates*.'¹ An evening class of Cambridge girls always rendered the song "The two little *orphans* of parents bereft" as "The two little *oftens*," etc.² The havoc which gardeners make in botanical names is well known. Mr. P. Giles tells me of one who re-christened the rose *Gloire de Dijon* as *Glory to John*.

As most of us know, times of mental stress cause strange perturbations in our use of language. A candidate in a recent examination wrote down the name of the Roman demagogue as *Serpentinus*. His wool-gathering mind identified the first two syllables of *Sāturninus* with *Satan*, and the author of evil in his traditional shape thus wriggled into the word. In another examination a gentleman of obviously sporting tastes turned the 'Menai Straits' into the 'Conway Stakes'!

It is equally clear that in certain classes of rhemes—which, it will be one of the first tasks of our study to determine—it is the meaning that is ^{Meaning} ^{dominant.} responsible for the changes. Some of our notions are, it would seem, natural couples, and of these either seems to involve its fellow, be this its twin or its anti-type.

¹ Celibates.

² This is an interesting case. The pronunciation of a word by the same speaker is not constant. It varies as he speaks slowly or rapidly, carefully or carelessly; and so arise *Lento-forms* and *Allegro-forms* as they have been named. With these girls the Allegro-form, *i.e.* the most familiar form of *orphan* and *often*, was the same (*orfn*), and this led to the transfer of the Lento-form of *often* to *orphan*.

I have before me a piece of Latin prose where I find that I have written *magis* when I meant *minus*, and Latin MSS. show that copyists make the same interchange.¹ M. Bréal² discusses the volatile negative, and my eldest boy when beginning to talk used "*any* more" for "no more." My friend and colleague, Prof. Arthur Platt, tells me how an acquaintance of his, who could not find a match for his pipe when he wanted it, said "I seldom forget to come without one!"—a curiously complex instance of confusion. Even Goethe has "Warum tanzen Bübchen mit Mädchen so gern? *Ungleich dem Gleichen* bleibet nicht fern."³

The inter-relations of concrete and abstract names is a subject of considerable linguistic and philosophical importance. In chapter xiii. M. Bréal gives numerous examples of "concretion" in the meaning of abstracts. That names of actions and states have passed, and still pass, into the names of concrete objects is undeniable: but the causes at work are by no means perfectly clear. It is not surprising that, when once the concrete application had made its way into the usages of a word, it should overpower the abstract. Language is built upon the senses, and they exert upon it an attraction as powerful and constant as gravity. But it is not easy to see what is the first stage or the ground of the change. Why, when a concrete substantive is required, does the popular mind turn to the abstract? Why do we speak of our "possessions" side

¹ e. g. at Manilius, iv. 110.

² *Infra*, pp. 200 sqq.

³ Polle, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

by side with "possession is nine points of the law"? Why did the double sense develop in the Latin *mancipium*? Was not *servus* enough to express a slave that they must materialize *servitium*? May it be that to the popular consciousness the abstract sums up, as it were, the potentiality of the rheme, and so that when a new word was wanted, this naturally suggests itself, not because it is abstract, but because it is undetermined? Certainly it is not easy to see how a people with the concrete and almost earthy imagination of the Romans, a people who built temples to *Honor*, *Concordia*, *Virtus*, and other creations of the mind, as though they were material beings, at the same time used the abstract with a freedom which we cannot reproduce,¹ unless it was for them the centre or, we might say, the source of the potency of a rheme.²

The classification of rhemes is one of the first necessities to our science. Its importance to scientific grammar has lately been recognized by two The classification of rhemes.

¹ I mean usages like those of a noteworthy passage of Cicero, *de nat. deorum*, 2. § 98, "Adde huc fontium gelidas perennitates, liquores perlucidos amnium, riparum uestitus uiridissimos, speluncarum concauas altitudines, saxorum asperitates, impendentium montium altitudines immensitatesque camporum adde etiam reconditas auri argentique uenas infinitamque uim marmoris." Nouns, which were not originally distinct, but have become so, are treated in the same way: *cor* (the heart, we should say 'brains') is used for *sapientia*, and so Persius can say "*cor* iubet hoc *Enni*" (= Ennius cordatus), "so bids sage Ennius."

² I hope M. Bréal will not consider my language too metaphorical. As we cannot escape from metaphor, I think we may as well employ it. The risks of deception will be less the more freely we do so.

inquirers. Prof. Delbrück prefaces his comparative syntax of the Indo-European verb with a distribution of roots according to the way in which the element of time enters into the conception; and Prof. Elmer has given a not very dissimilar division of verbal roots for the purpose of clearing the ground for his discrimination of the usages of the Latin subjunctive present and perfect.¹ The utility which such divisions possess would be much diminished if it blinded us to the possibility of illumining the dark places of grammar by means of distributions based upon different principles.

There is a singular phenomenon to be noticed in the formation of the Greek verb to which Dr. Rutherford has deservedly called attention. "All verbs," Middle future from active presents in Greek. he writes,² "which refer primarily to a physical process, and do not merely state the fact that such and such an action is going on, are either *deponent throughout* or *deponents in the future tense*" (my italics); and later, "The verbs which reject the active endings of the future in favour of the middle endings, at the same time that they retain the active inflexions in their other tenses, are all words expressing the exercise of the senses or denoting some functional state or process." Such words are ὀρῶ fut. ὀρήσομαι, πίνω fut. πίνομαι, νέω fut. νέωσομαι, βοῶ fut. βοήσομαι. Dr. Rutherford writes of these formations, "The reason for this anomaly in form it is useless to discuss as it is impossible to discover."

¹ *Studies in Latin Moods and Tenses*, Cornell Studies in Classical Philology, No. vi.

² *New Phrynichus*, p. 383.

In this Gibbonian sentence the eminent Grecian intended merely to decline and not to discourage research; and it should spur the votaries of our subject to provide him with the solution that he seeks. Let us see if we can do anything towards it. The problem involves a double question. (1) Why should the future more than other tenses show a preference for the middle or reflexive forms? (2) Why should this preference be confined to verbs which have a particular meaning? The answer may perhaps be found without plunging deeply into metaphysics. In proportion as the concept underlying a rheme is felt to involve a reference to present consciousness, will the mind experience a difficulty in referring it to the future, or, to use a metaphor, would we grasp a concept that is to be so referred, it must be provided with a handle.

All the verbs furthermore which show the peculiarity in question involve such reference in a greater or less degree. Take "hearing" for example. "I hear" gives us no trouble to grasp, nor, with the aid of recollection, "I heard," "I have heard"; but throw the concept into the future "I shall hear," and it seems to become elusive at once. In this instance the reference to a present consciousness may be called "pure," but this is not always the case. I cannot observe other people's hearing; but I can observe other people's jumping. And hence into the Greek rheme, *πηδῶ*, future *πηδήσομαι*, entered not only a reference to the Greek's own muscular sensations which accompanied the act of leaping, but also a reference to other impressions received through

a different sense, the sense of sight, which he instinctively felt were very different from the former.

Now the use of the forms of the middle provided Greek with the handle required. These apparently differed only from the active in the greater stress laid upon the concern of the subject in the action. Thus ἀκούω was simply *I hear*. The effect of ἀκούσομαι may be given by *I will hear*: *I*, where the enforcement of the idea of the personal subject represents, we may say, the mental effort required to project my hearing into the future.

The fugitive, elusive nature of these concepts is shown in another way. Modern English, when it has to express present time, does not use the (old) present tense, as *it rains*, but the periphrastic form as *it is raining*, *they are playing*, and even *it is lightening*. But to this rule¹ verbs expressing the activities of the senses or the mind are exceptions. Thus *I hear*, *I smell*, *I think*, but not, except in occasional use and with a special meaning, *I am smelling*, *I am thinking*.²

It may be noted in passing that Delbrück's view (*Syntax*, ii. p. 71) that indicative presents formed from "punktuell" roots should have, and once had, a future sense (as εἶμι "I shall go" actually has), and lost it through the influence of the presents formed from this other class of roots, receives no support from English,

¹ In such cases there will be wide differences in the concepts, as in the case of a blind man, a professional athlete, and a mere spectator.

² I am glad to see this peculiarity duly recorded in Dr. Sweet's *Historical Grammar of English*, vol. ii. § 2218.

which replaces in this case also the form *I go* = Ger. *ich gehe* ("I go, sir, and wert not," Authorised Version) by *I am going*. Qu. *When do you go (or are you going)?* Ans. *I am going* (so usually) *to-morrow, next week, in a month's time*.¹

The use of different rhemes when we should have expected only different epirrhemes, or, in other words, the general question of anomalous formations (irregular comparison, declension, conjugation, etc.) in Indo-European languages, has been dealt with by Prof. H. Osthoff of Heidelberg in a recently published pamphlet.² He regards these irregularities (an appellation however against which he protests) as remains of the individualizing tendency of early speech in opposition to the classifying methods which subsequently prevailed. The explanation is unquestionably correct as far as it goes, and it is true also, as he says, that "the objects of the conceptual world have more sharpness and individuality the nearer they are to the perceptions and thought of the speaker." But these generalities take us only a little way on the path. What we want to know is in what rhemes this ancient individualizing tendency persists, and why it persists in them.

¹ Delbrück divides roots into "punktuell" and "nichtpunktuell." This definition of "punktuell," for which there is no corresponding English term, is as follows: "*Punktuell* ist eine Aktion wenn durch sie ausgesagt wird dass die Handlung mit ihrem Eintritt zugleich vollendet ist." He explains that he regards the vast majority of all roots as "punktuell." To the minority, e.g. *es* "be," he gives in default of a better the name of "nicht-punktuell."

² *Vom Suppletivwesen der Indo-Germanischen Sprachen*, von H. Osthoff, Heidelberg, 1900.

Prof. Osthoff refers, *inter alia*, to the interesting difference which is represented in the English *hart*, *hind*. With these exceptions the language of our Teutonic forefathers,¹ formed the feminine of all wild animals from the masculine. Prof. Osthoff rejects the explanation that the anomaly is due to the fact that the male deer is notably distinguished from the female by its possession of horns; and prefers to seek its cause in the German love of the chase. Supposing, and I confess I see no reason for this, that the two explanations are incompatible, the only way of resolving the dispute would be to examine the languages of other hunting nations with this special point in view.

The preceding discussion suggests at once that psychology, and through that metaphysics, will gain advantage from the study of Semantics. As I have touched upon this elsewhere, I will only here say, that when philologists have stripped from a rheme all that it derived through its outward form, whatever remains is material for the psychologist. Philosophy has long been aware of this; but its use of the stores of language in the past has been but sparse and casual. With a systematized study of meaning, we may hope that this will change.

From another point of view it should be found of service to the philosopher. No branch of inquiry has suffered more from language than philosophy. For none is strictness and consistency of language more necessary, or, apparently, more difficult to secure. In the latest

¹ Old High German, *hiruz*, masc., *hinta*, fem.

treatment of this subject by Dr. F. Tönnies, in a triad of articles in *Mind* on Philosophical Terminology, it is said of "the obscurity and confusion in psychological and philosophical terminology":—

"We must refer those who doubt it to a comparison of the best-known works, those which excel each in its speciality, of European and American origin. Almost each of these operates in these regions with different concepts, or at any rate with concepts which are differently determined. But even within each particular work, if we examine carefully, we shall not find a consistent terminology; but shall often find that the sense in which an expression was introduced, even the definition which was given with it, has been neglected and apparently forgotten in the course of the exposition, so that the reader who would rest upon it as upon a staff, feels it break in his hand. 'If we regard philosophy so far as it comes into contact with the whole of life, we shall feel with pain the misunderstandings which stream from the uncertainty and confusion of language (*Eucken*).'"¹

A most deplorable state of things. But who is to blame? If the present century has taught us anything, it has surely taught us that the one way by which we can reach an understanding of the present is through the study of the past. If this cannot be denied, where are the exact and patient studies by which the develop-

¹ Dr. F. Tönnies, in the Welby Prize Essay, published in *Mind*, 1899, p. 467. The translators into English of Wundt's *Psychology* make the same complaint.

ment of the concepts in question is traced through various surroundings and successive centuries, by which their changes are unravelled or their stability demonstrated? I ask the philosophers: *Where?*

This general survey of the subject would be still more imperfect than it is did it omit all reference to the methods which our science should employ, and the practical means by which its advancement may be best secured. Its initial and ever-recurring problem concerns the constitution of the rheme, and may be briefly put as follows. A certain combination of articulate sounds is used by an individual (you, I, or he) to recall to himself, or another, a certain mental *πᾶθος* or affection (idea): *what* is the mental affection so recalled, and *why* is this or that combination used to recall it? As we have said already, no inquiry into the present of a rheme can dispense with the help of the inquiry into its past; but though

The
methods
of the
science.

ultimately the two inquiries are not separable, they may be separately pursued. If we would investigate the present contents of a rheme, three methods appear to be at once available: the obvious but treacherous procedure of introspection, the observing of subjects who are unconscious of this observation, and the scrutiny of the evidence furnished in contemporary documents. To these may be added as a fourth the study, from a linguistic point of view,¹ of

¹ Aphasia, so far as I know, appears to have been little studied from a linguistic point of view. A contribution, however, has been made in Meringer and Meyer's *Versprechen und Verlesen*, Stuttgart, 1895.

the phenomena of partial aphasia, including everything, from the confusion which accompanies a local lesion of the brain, to those weaknesses which we know by the familiar names of slips of the tongue or of the pen. A metaphor may serve to make this clear. So long as all works well, we travel from sense to sound, as in the dark, unconscious of our route ; but once let the "points" be deranged, and the unexpected terminus reveals an unsuspected junction. If we wish to have a single word to include all those branches, we might extend the meaning of a term already in existence, and call it the "Synonymik" of the present ; but I should prefer the new name *Rhematology*.¹ There will also be a Rhematology of the past, whose methods will only differ from the former's by the fact that inasmuch as its subject-matter is non-contemporary, the first two modes of investigation will not be available. The loss of the second one can only be imperfectly replaced by a collection and comparison of analogous observations from other times and places.

The investigation of the *why* of rhemes is a study of their history and cannot be too severely historical. All competent lexicography, of which there is unfortunately still too little, now recognizes this ; but Prof. Bréal, in his *Etymological Dictionary of Latin*,² has the distinction of being one of the first to apply it systematically to the etymology of an ancient tongue. In the historical

¹ I should limit the word to the special study of separate rhemes, preferring *Semantics* as the general name of our science.

² *Dictionnaire Étymologique Latin*, par Michel Bréal et Anatole Bailly. Paris, 1885.

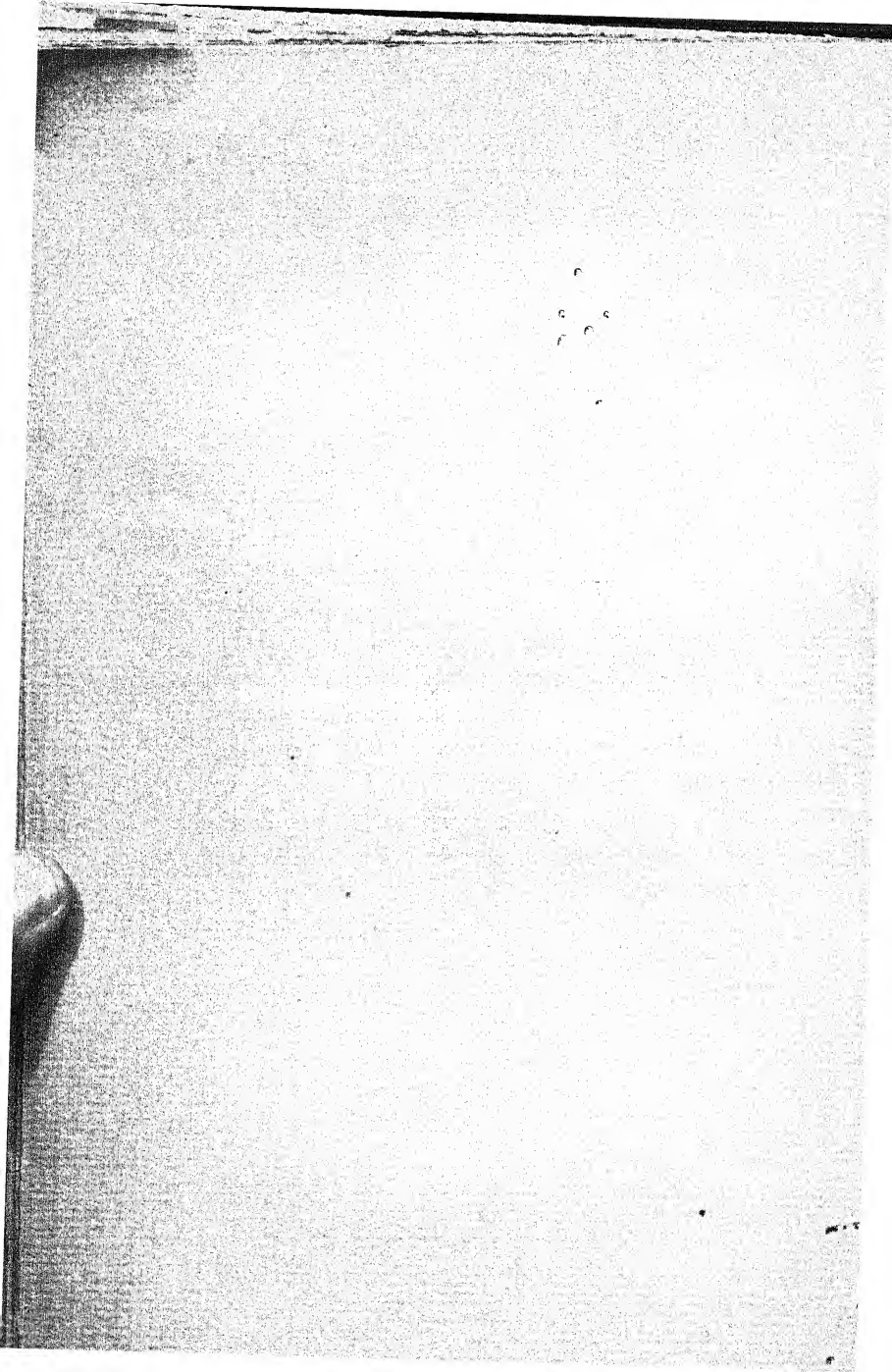
treatment of the rhemes of a language there are three cautions which must be ever borne in mind. We must be careful not to limit history to chronology, and confuse the contemporary with the coeval. Progress in language is never uniform, and the caprice of a literary record may happen to show one and the same date for a usage which was fresh from the mintage of the moment, and for one which is the last remnant of a forgotten and unintelligible past.¹ We must distinguish carefully between the products of the unconscious and of the conscious activities of mind. The difference between popular and literary, or scientific, creations in language is no less than the difference between instinct and intention. And, lastly, in the study of this, as of every other development, we must *observe the trend*. The progress of a language may be compared in some respects to the progress of a spiral down its cone. The same phases will be repeated but not the same moments, and it will

¹ The proper recognition of the stratification of language is not without importance in the settlement of literary problems. By a singular fatality what is perhaps the most convincing argument for the genuineness of Sophocles, *Ajax*, 841 sq., has been used to demonstrate its spuriousness. In order to obtain for the curse of Ajax the utmost solemnity possible, Sophocles has clothed it in an ancient Ionic and epic form, as is shown by *τάς, φιλίστων, ὀλοίατο*. This effect could hardly have been obtained in any other way. Of *φίλιστος*, to which chief exception has been taken, it may be observed, that though not found elsewhere in extant literature, it is sufficiently supported by the *φίλιων* of the *Odyssey*, and by its use as a proper name. As regards the ending *-ατο*, we may note that it is not without significance that tragedy confines its use to the optative, and, as my friend Prof. Ridgeway pointed out to me a good many years ago, to the optative of uncontracted verbs.

never free itself from the shaping conditions of its native medium.¹

It is easy to see how vast are the territories that appertain to our subject, and they are almost wholly unexplored. The divinations of individuals, however brilliant, can do but little. They but flash illumination into the scene for a moment and are gone, with the darkness blacker than before. Only by the methods to which the progress of all other sciences is due, can this make substantial advance. Facts must be collected from every quarter, wide and at the same time discriminating inductions formed, and the whole field held and controlled by the rigorous method and the chastened imagination of science. The amount of work to be done is beyond question great; but it can be readily distributed, and its interest is not less indubitable. But *co-operation is required*. A *society* should be formed whose task should be to gather and arrange materials, to furnish direction and advice to individual workers, and to put before the world the fruits of their research. May the foundation of such a society be not far off; for its need is very pressing.

¹ I need not here repeat what I have said elsewhere upon the necessity of studying either outlying dialects, savage languages and the speech of children. See Appendix, pp. 333 sq. [Only since this preface was in type has Wundt's important *Völkerpsychologie* (1900) come into my hands. J. P. P.]



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SEMANTICS

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

THERE is a constant succession of books on the subject of comparative grammar, for the use both of students and of the general public; yet it does not seem that we are offered what we really need. Language is full of lessons for those who know how to question it. Through all the centuries humanity has deposited in Language the acquisitions of material and moral life. But it must be approached from the side on which it appeals to the mind. If we limit ourselves to the changes of vowels and consonants, the study is reduced to the proportions of a merely secondary branch of acoustics and physiology; if we think it enough to enumerate the losses undergone by the machinery of grammar, we give the impression of a building that is falling into ruins; if we confine ourselves to vague theories on the origin of Language, we merely add an unprofitable chapter to the history of systems.

There is something else to do. We may extract from the Science of Language whatever food for reflection it suggests. We may also find therein some rules for our own tongue, since each of us contributes his share to the evolution of human speech. It is that which should be brought to light, and it is that which I have tried to illustrate in this book.

Not long since the Science of Language would have thought it derogatory to admit that it might serve some practical end. It existed, so it said, for itself alone; and it no more took heed of the profit that mankind might draw from it, than the astronomer, calculating the orbit of celestial bodies, regards the prevision of the tides. Should my colleagues consider that my method will debase our science, I can only answer that I do not believe that their high aims are justified. Their aims, indeed, are not suitable to the study of a human product such as Language. For Language is a product, begun and continued with a practical goal in view, from which, in consequence, the conception of utility cannot be absent for a moment. More: I believe that to exaggerate these researches is to deprive them of their worth. The Science of Language expresses man to himself: it shows him how he has constructed and perfected the most necessary instrument of civilisation, despite obstacles of every kind, despite inevitable delays, despite even momentary retrogressions. It is the right of this science also to explain by what means the instrument, which has been confided to us, and for which we are responsible, is preserved or modified. It

must surely, then, amaze the thinking reader to be told that man counts for nothing, and that words—both in form and meaning—live a life peculiar to themselves.

The danger of our studies has lain and still lies in the abuse of abstractions and of metaphors. We have seen languages treated as living beings: we have been told that words are born, fight, propagate, and die. There would be no harm in this way of speaking, if there were not people who interpret it literally. But since such people exist, it is necessary to protest without ceasing against a terminology which, amongst other drawbacks, exempts us from seeking the true causes.¹

The Indo-European tongues are condemned to figurative speech. They can no more escape from it than man, according to the Arab proverb, can jump out of his shadow. The structure of the phrase compels them to it: there is a perpetual temptation to vivify that which is lifeless, to transmute into action that which is merely a state. Dry grammar even is defenceless against imagery: what is it but a beginning of myth, when we say that *φέρω borrows its tenses from ἐνέγκω*, or

¹ In writing this, I am thinking of a whole series of books and articles, both foreign and French. The French reader will especially recall the little book of Arsène Darmesteter, *La Vie des Mots*. There is no doubt that the author has unduly emphasised and pushed too deep the comparison, so that at times he really appears to believe in his own metaphors, a pardonable fault when one thinks of the influence of style. I was a friend of both the Darmesteters, those Aqvins of French philology, throughout their lives, I have done homage to their memory, and I should deeply regret saying anything that might reflect upon it. (See at the end of this book my article on *La Vie des Mots*.)

that "clou" takes an *s* in the plural? But of all men philologists should be most on their guard against this snare.

It is not only primitive man, the child of nature, who regards himself as the measure and model of all things, and fills the sky and air with beings like unto himself. Science is not exempt from this error. Take the genealogical table of language as described and even drawn in many books. Is it not a product of the purest anthropomorphism? What a deal of writing there has been on the difference between *mother tongues* and *daughter tongues*! But tongues have no daughters, neither do they give birth to dialects. To speak of proto-Hellenic or proto-Aryan is to borrow habits of thought from another order of ideas, to force upon the Science of Language the hypothesis of zoology. The same folly is seen in that pro-ethnic Indo-European language which many tireless philologists construct and re-construct, just as, to account for their different races, the Greeks imagined Ancestors—*Aeolus, Dorus, Ion, and Achaeus*, sons or grandsons of *Hellen*.¹

There are few books which, in small compass, contain so many paradoxes as the little volume in which Schleicher gives his ideas on the origin and development of languages. Though, being a botanist and Darwinian, he usually keeps his mind clear and methodical, he betrays in this work habits of thought appropriate to

¹ I would draw the attention of my readers to the recent work of M. Victor Henry, who combats the same error from a different point of view—*Antinomies linguistiques*.

some disciple of the mystics. For instance, he places the epoch of the perfection of languages in the remote past, before all history. As soon as a people makes its entry into history (he says), and begins to have a literature, decadence, irreparable decadence, appears.

• Language, in fact, is developed inversely to the progress of mind. A noteworthy example of the power which first impressions and ideas received in childhood may exercise!¹

Leaving aside the phonetic changes which belong to physiological grammar, I propose to study the intellectual causes which have influenced the transformation of our languages. To make this research methodical, I have ranged the facts under a certain number of *laws*, though readers will see later on what I mean by *law*, an expression that must not be taken in the imperative sense. These do not belong to the blind laws without exceptions, among which, if we may believe some of our colleagues, are the laws of phonetics. I have taken care, on the contrary, to mark the limits of each. I have shown that the history of Language, by the side of changes pursued with a rare logic, displays also many a tentative essay, sketched out, and left half-finished.

An onward march in a straight line, with neither turn nor winding, would be a new experience in human affairs. On the contrary, human achievements appear to us as laborious things, thwarted without ceasing by the survivals of a past that cannot be annulled, by

¹ Schleicher was originally destined to the ecclesiastical profession. He afterwards became a Hegelian.

collateral enterprises conceived in a different spirit, or even by the unlooked-for results of the attempts actually in progress.

I have at last decided to publish this book, which I have hitherto abandoned as often as I have begun. Extracts¹ from it have appeared at various times in the form of essays, but again and again, repelled by the difficulty of the subject, I have vowed never to return to the book itself. And yet this long incubation has not been without use. I am sure that I see more clearly to-day into the development of Language than I did thirty years ago. My progress has lain in setting aside all secondary causes, and in appealing directly to the only true causes, which are human intelligence and will.

To permit will to intervene in the history of Language seems almost a heresy, so carefully has it been banished and excluded for forty years. But though men were justified in renouncing the puerilities of the ancient science, they contented themselves with an unduly simple psychology when they plunged into the opposite extreme. Between the actions of a consciously deliberate will, and the purely instinctive phenomenon, there is room for many intermediary states; and our philologists would have profited ill by the lessons of contemporary philosophy did they still impose upon us a choice between the two horns of this dilemma. You

¹ In my *Mélanges de mythologie et de linguistique*, in the *Annuaire de l'Association des études grecques*, in the *Mémoires de la Société de linguistique*, in the *Journal des Savants*, etc.

must close your eyes to evidence not to see that a will, dim but persistent, presides over the changes of Language.

How should this will be represented ?

I think that it should be represented under the form of thousands, of millions, of billions of furtive attempts, for the most part unfortunate, sometimes attended by a partial success, attempts which, thus guided, thus corrected, thus made perfect, attain to definiteness in some specified direction. The goal of Language is to be understood. The child, for many months, exercises his tongue in uttering vowels, in articulating consonants. How many failures precede the clear pronunciation of a single syllable ! Grammatical innovations are of a kindred nature, with the difference, that in them a whole people collaborates. There must, in truth, be a thousand unskilful, incorrect, obscure constructions before that one is found which is an expression of thought, not perfect (of such there are none) but at least sufficient. In this long labour there is nothing that cannot be traced to the will.¹

Such is the study to which I invite my readers. They must not expect to find any very complicated facts of nature. As always where the spirit of the people is in question, we are surprised by the simplicity of the

¹ "A breath," says Herder somewhere, "becomes the painting of the world, the picture of our ideas and of our feelings !" This is a presentment of things from the standpoint of a philosopher in love with mystery. There was more truth in the picture drawn by Lucretius. Centuries have been needed and countless efforts for this breath to produce one clearly formulated thought !

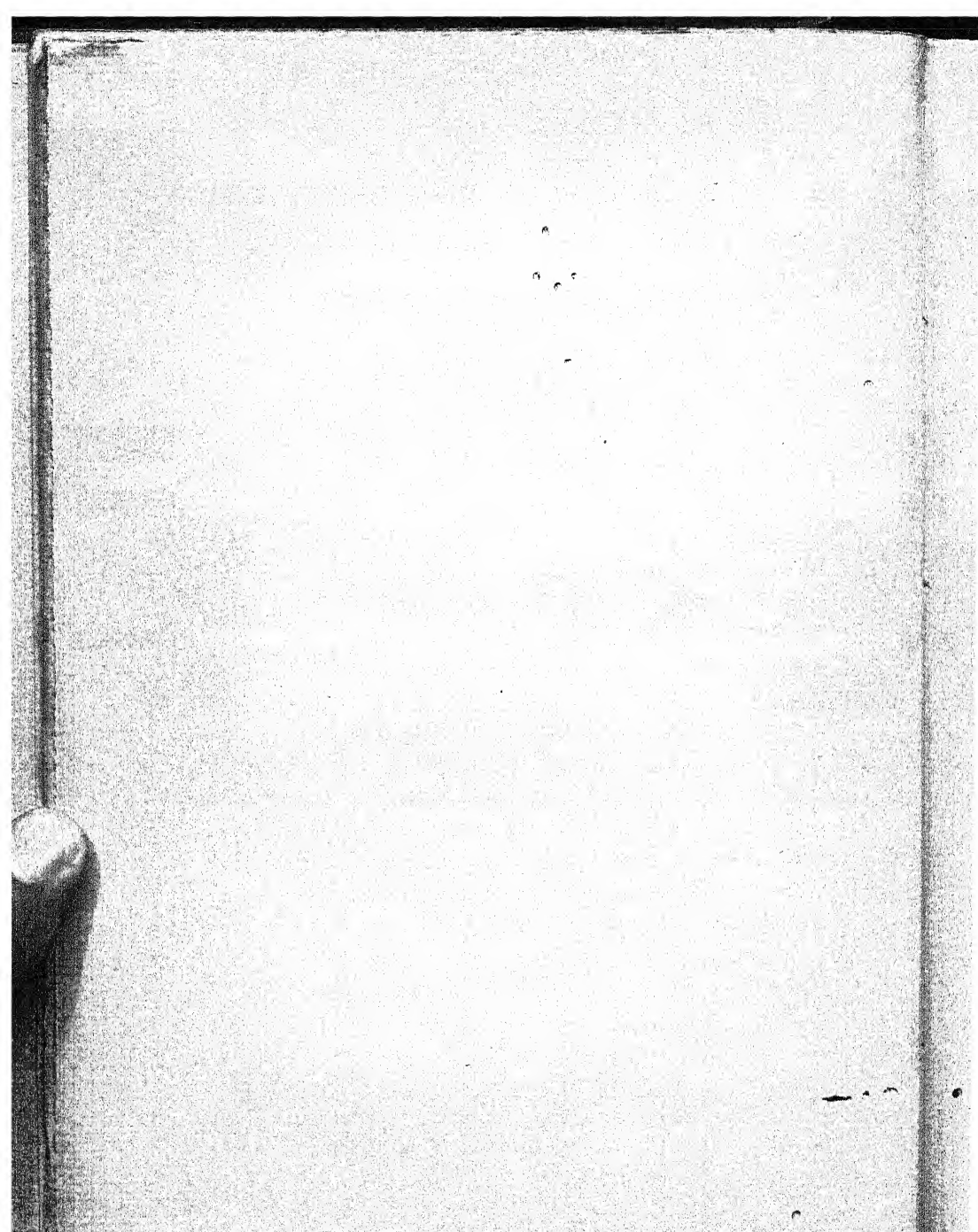
means, a simplicity in strong contrast to the extent and importance of the results obtained.

I have designedly drawn my examples from the most generally known languages: it will be as easy to increase the number, as to produce others from less widely explored regions. Since the laws which I have tried to indicate are chiefly of the psychological order, I do not doubt that they will hold good outside the Indo-European family. My object has been to trace out a few great lines, to mark a few divisions, and to sketch a provisional plan in a domain which has not yet been exploited, and demands the combined labour of several generations of philologists. I therefore beg the reader to look upon this book as a mere Introduction to the science that I propose to name *Semantics*.¹

¹ Σημαντική τέχνη, the Science of Significations, from the verb σημαίνω, to "signify," in opposition to *Phonetics*, the science of sounds.

PART I

THE INTELLECTUAL LAWS OF LANGUAGE



CHAPTER I

THE LAW OF SPECIALISATION

Definition of the word *law*—False idea prevalent on the subject of languages known as *synthetic* and *analytic*—Specialisation of function one of the characteristics of analytic languages.

WE define *law*, using the word in the philosophic sense, as the constant relation discoverable in a series of phenomena. One or two examples will make this clearer.

If all the changes that take place in the government and habits of a people tend towards centralisation, we say that centralisation is the *law* of the government and habits of that people. If the literature and art of an epoch are distinguished for the qualities of order and moderation, we say that order and moderation are the *law* of the art and literature of that epoch. In the same way, if the grammar of a language tends consistently towards simplification, we can say that simplification is the *law* of the grammar of that language. And, to come to our point, if certain modifications of thought, expressed primarily by all words, are little by little restricted to a small number of words, or even to a

single word, which takes upon itself alone the whole function, we say that Specialisation is the *law* that has presided over these changes. There can be no question of a preconcerted law, still less of a law imposed in the name of a higher authority.

Everybody is aware of the distinction between languages known as *synthetic* and languages known as *analytic*. Repetition has reduced it to a commonplace. Everybody also can tell more or less fully wherein the difference consists. But as to how this evolution was brought about, and by what causes, the vaguest and most inaccurate ideas still prevail.

No one has expressed better than J. J. Ampère the connection between the Latin and the Romance languages as popularly set forth. The book is justly criticised, but none the less represents the ideas of the majority even at the present day.

"The ancient grammatical synthesis," he writes, "in virtue of which a dying language was organised, is destroyed; the grammatical inflections are lost; the cases of the nouns, the tenses of the verbs, are no longer sufficiently distinguished. How can this confusion be simplified? The relations conveyed by the grammatical signs now confused or abolished are expressed by separate words; prepositions are made to supply the place of the terminations which denoted the cases of substantives; auxiliaries are substituted for those that marked the tenses of verbs. Genders are indicated by articles, and persons by pronouns. . . . In all languages

men have employed the same remedy for the same evil; in the same distress they have had recourse to the same expedient."¹

So, it is to *restore ruins*, to *remedy an evil*, to *emerge from confusion*, that the new processes have been invented. Such a statement of the case (and the same idea still exists, I repeat, in the minds of most philologists, even of those who most severely criticised the book) confuses the true succession of facts, and renders unintelligible the history of languages. In reality there was no restoration of ruins, for the terminations that were set aside had long ago become useless. The ancient languages were never in distress. The time has come to write a simple and a true history in the place of these improbabilities, and at the beginning of this history should be placed *The Law of Specialisation*.

One tendency of the mind, explained by the need for clearness, is the substitution of invariable independent exponents for exponents that are variable and dependent. This is a tendency consistent with the general aim of Language, which is to make itself understood at slightest cost, I mean with the least possible amount of trouble. But as the conditions in which Language is placed do not admit of creation *ex nihilo*, this effort is realised but slowly, by the means and at the *expense* of that which previously existed.

A first and tangible example is furnished by the comparative and the superlative.

¹ *Histoire de la langue française*, 2nd edition, p. 3, 10.

In ancient languages the adjective expresses degree by means of suffixes. These suffixes were originally numerous and diverse. Thus the comparative could be marked by the syllables *-ro* (*superus, inferus*), *-tero* (*interus, exterus*), *-ior* (*purior, largior*). The superlative could be marked by the syllables *-mo* (*summus, infimus*), *-timo* (*intimus, extimus*), *-issimo* (*dulcissimus*). Latin, as we know it, has already abandoned this diversity, keeping for each degree one suffix alone (*-ior, issimus*). Here is the first step towards simplicity.

If from Latin we pass to French, we still find a few comparatives in the ancient manner, an inheritance from the Latin: *graignor, forçor, hauçor, juvenor, gencior*.¹ There are also some superlatives: *pesme* (*pessimus*), *proisme* (*proximus*). But this mechanism, already deprived of its true meaning, rapidly disappears, not, as has been said, in consequence of phonetic change (for these words were perfectly practicable), but by the action of the law of Specialisation. One single word assumes in French the function of all these comparatives and superlatives. So also in the other Romance languages. In French, *plus*; in Italian, *più*; in Spanish, *mas*; in Portuguese, *mais*; in Roumanian, *mai*.

But what must be noted is that this privileged word which succeeds to all the comparatives of former days is itself a comparative. *Plus* represents the ancient Latin *plinius* (= Greek *πλεϊον*); the Spanish *mas*, the Portuguese *mais* represent *magis*. It is therefore the last survival of a species that is extinct, and extinct not

¹ Comparative of *grand, fort, haut, jeune, gent*.

without intention, and it fills by itself alone the place of all the others. The only exceptions are some comparatives such as *meilleur*, *pire*, *moindre*. These possess the advantage of relative brevity and are of such frequent usage that the new process has not supplanted them.

We can see from this first example in what the law of Specialisation consists. Among all words of a certain kind, distinguished by a certain grammatical imprint, there is always one which is little by little drawn apart from its fellows. It becomes the pre-eminent exponent of the grammatical conception of which it bears the stamp. But at the same time it loses its individual value, and is no more than a grammatical instrument, one of the wheels of the phrase. When the French say *un temps plus long*, *une journée plus courte*, the word *plus* serves to determine the adjective by which it is followed; but by itself it has no more existence from a semantic point of view than the inflection *-ior*.¹ In the same way we can guess the reason why the law of Specialisation demands the help of centuries before it can operate. Words have too much individual significance to adapt themselves at once to playing the part of auxiliary. It is only a long use of words in various connections that slowly prepares the mind to remove from them their superfluous value.

¹ That does not prevent the continued usage of the word *plus*, in the sense of *πλεϊον*, in its fullest and widest signification. Ex. "*En voulez-vous plus?—Qui peut le plus peut le moins.*" We shall find later on numerous examples of this segmentation of meanings. It is curious to note that pronunciation has up to a certain point differentiated these two *plus*.

It is not therefore, as is often said, the collapse of inflections, that has brought about the use, as a sort of make-shift, of *plus* and *magis*; that use dates from a time when inflections were still commonly employed. There are even examples of the cumulative use of the two processes: Plautus writes, *Magis dulcius, magis facilius, mollior magis*. These examples show the comparative idea beginning already to find its definite domicile in one particular adverb, although the mechanism *-ior, -issimus* is still in full force.

We come now to the substitution of prepositions for the ancient declensions.

It is well known that at first every substantive marked the relations of dependence, of interiority, of instrument, etc., by modifying its final syllables. But this method of expression was at once complicated and insufficient. It was complicated, because substantives, not being all constructed alike, appeared under different forms in one and the same case (genitive: *domini, rosæ, arboris*, etc.). It was insufficient because the cases of the declensions were too few in number to express all the relations that the mind was capable of conceiving.¹ This was the reason why adverbs were placed by the side of these cases to define them. But the habit of placing the same adverb by the side of the same case could not fail in the long run to produce upon the minds

¹ The cases of the declensions indicated indeed the place whither one goes, whence one comes, in which one is. But there was no inflection to express "across," "upon," "with," "round," etc.

of men an effect of which we shall presently have other examples: between the inflection and the particle of place or time they supposed the existence of some special connection, some relation of cause to effect. Instead of considering the adverb as a mere determinant of the case, popular intelligence saw in it the actual cause of the case; a well-known paralogism that philosophy designates by the formula *cum hoc, ergo propter hoc*. But when a paralogism is universal, it is undoubtedly not far from giving the impression of a truth. In a matter of Language, that which the people believes itself to feel passes into the condition of reality. Adverbs of place and time like ἀπό, περί, ἐπί, πρὸς, μετά, παρὰ, from having been the accompaniment of the genitive, dative, or accusative, became the cause of these cases: from having been adverbs, they became prepositions. The minds of men endowed them with a Transitive Force.¹

In the Homeric tongue, the transformation is already three-quarters accomplished.² It is wholly accomplished

¹ In the Syntax of Delbrück will be found many examples of this change of character, ancient adverbs becoming prepositions. But I differ in opinion from the author of the *Grundriss* on the order and connection of the facts.

² In this fragment of a phrase: βλεφάρων ἀπὸ δάκρυον ἤκεν (*a palpebris lacrimam demisit*) ἀπὸ accompanies rather than governs the genitive. It is the same with ἐπὶ and the dative: οἷον ἐπὶ Ζεὺς θῆκε κακὸν μῦθον (*quibus Jupiter imposuit malam sortem*). Or with the accusative and περί: νῆσον τὴν περὶ πόντος ἀπείριστος ἐσσεφάνωται (*insulam quam circum pontus infinitus ambit*). It might also be easily imagined that, in these examples, the particle of place determines the verbs.

in the most ancient documents by which the Latin language has been preserved for us. In the Vedic texts, on the contrary, we find words which have since become well-known prepositions, still in the condition of adverbs: *per, ob, ad, sub, super, ab*.

The existence of the declension is threatened from the moment that a language possesses prepositions. What, indeed, is the use of these cases that add nothing to meaning? Is the preposition not enough? The preposition is not only perfectly sufficient, but also fulfils a more important function, for it marks precisely and explicitly the relations indicated by the inflection in a vague and general manner. It is moreover more convenient to use, for it is always the same, always easily recognisable. Yet, as nothing comes about quickly when time-honoured habits, common to large masses of men, are in question, the inflections do not disappear at one blow, once and for all. They begin by growing vague. They are used loosely, they are confused one with another.

The first symptoms of this transformation go back much farther than is usually believed. The passage from Suetonius is often quoted, in which, speaking of the habits of Augustus, he reports that the Emperor, for the sake of greater clearness, did not hesitate to add prepositions to nouns, and conjunctions to verbs. The passage is curious in itself. But the last words especially must be noted (*præpositiones*) *quæ detractæ afferunt aliquid obscuritatis, etsi gratiam augent*.¹ It was

¹ *Life of Octavius Augustus*, 86.

considered elegant and well-bred to dispense with prepositions and conjunctions. This was the ancient Latin language. But the Emperor, who as we know liked to affect rustic habits, adopted the new custom.

Of this rustic speech we have another contemporary witness. This is the dedication and regulations of a temple of Sabina, in the year 57 B.C.¹ These regulations provide for the event of donations being made to the temple: *Si pecunia ad id templum data erit. . . . Quod ad eam ædem donum datum erit. . . .* Instead of the dative, we here find the modern construction: "To this temple." We must note that this is an official document, at once legal and religious. Official language prefers to be archaic, if nothing is thereby lost in matter of precision: but from the moment that precision is at stake, it does not shrink from neologism.

Not long after Augustus, we already witness the decadence of case-inflections. At Pompeii, we find: *cum discentes*, "with his pupils;" *cum collegas*, "with his colleagues." In an inscription of Misenum of the year 159 A.D. is written: *per multo tempore*. In another of almost the same period: *ex litteras*.² The Latin of Africa, ever since the epoch of Hadrian, displays this kind of defect. An engineer of Lambes, though knowing his language well, makes a mistake on a like point: and writes: *a rigorem, sine curam*.³

If we come down to two centuries later, we find the

¹ *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, ix. 3513.

² *C. I. L.*, viii. 10,570; x. 3344.

³ Boissier, *Journal des Savants*, 1896, p. 503.

use of inflections more and more uncertain, that of prepositions more and more frequent. In the *Pilgrimage of Silvia* (fourth century) are found expressions like these: *Fundamenta de habitationibus ipsorum. . . fallere vos super hanc rem non possum . . . valde instructus de scripturis. . .* And even: *Lecto omnia de libro Moysi*, "having read all of the book of Moses." Together with the Latin prepositions, we find the Greek preposition *κατά*. *Cata singulos hymnos fit oratio*.¹

M. Max Bonnet, in his book on *Le Latin de Grégoire de Tours*, draws attention to the fact that Grégoire is mistaken in his usage of cases when preceded by a preposition.² Not that he is unaware of the Latin declension, and of the value of each case. But when he employs one of the prepositions *cum*, *de*, *ad*, *per*, *in*, *sub*, it is a matter of indifference to him whether he uses with it the accusative or the ablative.

It was not, therefore, through ignorance, through the destruction of forms, or through the impossibility of agreement, that, once the declension was in ruins, the

¹ It is well known that this preposition passed afterwards into the Romance languages: Spanish, *cada uno*; Italian, *caduno*; old French, *chaün*, *cheün*.

² P. 522. Speaking of the confusion of cases, M. Bonnet says: "It is allowable to doubt whether economy of forms has had much to do with the matter. It must not be forgotten, for instance, that if the accusative singular is generally distinguished from the ablative only by an *m*, which was probably pronounced with difficulty, it is quite different with the plural and singular neuter in the third declension. Here the inflections *as* and *is*, *os* and *is*, *es* and *ibus*, *es* and *ebus*, *us* and *ibus*, *us* and *ore*, *en* and *ine*, etc.—had kept their sounds perfectly distinct. So much help was not needed for the distinction of cases.

people had recourse in despair to another method of representing the same ideas. No: it is at the summit of Roman hierarchy, in the most splendid moment of its literature, that we find the first examples. The language of ordinary affairs must have been the first to welcome the innovation, and thus prepared the way for a new grammatical system.

The most important fact in the history of our languages, that which permanently characterises the transition from synthesis to analysis, comes, therefore, under the heading of the principle of Specialisation. Yet there is one use of the cases to which prepositions afforded no help: that is their use to distinguish subject and object. And it is accordingly the distinction of nominative and accusative which has lasted longest. We shall return to this when treating of construction.

In proportion as the old adverbs changed into prepositions, the custom prevailed of placing them regularly *before* the substantive: I may be permitted to make on this subject an observation which I think is important. But that it sounds odd to speak in such a way, I should say that our modern languages have never had a happier chance, and have never escaped a greater danger than when Latin had the sense to change into prepositions little words such as *in*, *ad*, *per*, *cum*, which up to that time had been habitually joined to their object in the form of postpositions. Forms such as *mecum*, *tecum*, *vobiscum*, *semper*, *paulisper*, *quoad*, still bear witness to this condition, which has been abandoned by Latin, but from which the brothers of Latin,

Umbrian and Oscan, have never succeeded in emerging. In Umbrian, for example, not only *cum*, but also *in*, *ad*, *per*, and all ancient expressions of that kind, have remained postpositions. "To the altar, towards the altar, upon the altar" are expressed by *asacum*, *asamen*, *asamad*, and, owing to carelessness of pronunciation, by *asaco*, *asame*, *asama*. "To the limit, towards the limit, on the limit" are expressed by *termnuco*, *termnume*, *termnuma*. And so on. As early as the first century before the Christian era, we see by the defects which make their appearance that confusion is setting in. Between the substantive and the little word by which it is followed vicious connections are formed. If Latin had not been diverted from this path, its declension would have taken a very different turn. Instead of becoming impoverished, it would have been enriched, for new cases would have been formed. Instead of ending in the Romance languages, Latin would have ended in some such idiom as Basque.

Owing to a just recognition of the demands of clearness, modern languages have become more and more rigorous on this point. They have insisted that nothing should come between the preposition and its "object"; and while Latin still tolerates certain intercalations, French admits of no exceptions to this rule.¹

But in no language are the effects of the principle of Specialisation seen so clearly as in English. English

¹ We cannot accordingly approve of the new fashion, established within the last few years, on the subject of the preposition *avec*.

has not abandoned its genitive: but it has put the exponent of the genitive to so bold a use that it obtains therefrom the same services as if it were an independent word. Having adopted a simple *s* as a uniform inflection for all substantives, it has made this *s* moveable, so that it may be placed after two or more substantives. *The Queen of Great Britain's Navy. Pope and Addison's Age.* In this way English has provided for itself two varieties of genitive, the one with *s*, the other with *of*, the one progressive, the other retrogressive, a curious example which shows how, by becoming supple, the mechanism of a language can be perfected, and its resources widened.¹

The English conjugation will give us another example of the law of Specialisation.

Without doubt English is the most analytical of modern languages. It has often been said that this analytical character was due to the mingling of Anglo-Saxon with French grammar; an explanation which, in this form, is inaccurate. What is true is that the upper classes of society, in making use of French for many centuries, had abandoned English to the lower classes. Now, as we have just seen, it is the cultured portion of a nation that retards the evolution of a language.

¹ There is, as Mr. Jespersen remarks, a certain mathematical elegance in the substitution of a single letter for the varied inflections of Latin. But it cannot be doubted that the ancients took pleasure in this variety: it was to them as a series of musical chords, the resonance and sequence of which it gave them satisfaction to hear. Language has cast off this somewhat childish luxury.

When aristocracies take no interest in the national tongue, this evolution progresses at a greater rate. The Germanic conjugation, with its complicated rules that present so great a difficulty to the foreigner, is not wholly easy even for the native. Jacob Grimm counts in German as many as twelve classes of conjugation, of which more or less well-preserved specimens appear equally in English, such verbs, for instance, as *I give, I gave; I bind, I bound; I dig, I dug; I hold, I held*, etc. We know how modern English overcomes this difficulty: in the stead and place of these present and preterite tenses with their manifold formations, it makes use, or at least is at liberty to make use, of the present *I do*, of the preterite *I did*, turning the verb into an invariable word. The change began with the interrogative and negative turns of phrase. Then the verb *do*, continuing its progress, introduced itself into merely affirmative sentences. Suppose by a fresh step in advance it imposes itself on affirmative phrases and so becomes of constant and obligatory use, English will have substituted its auxiliary verb for all other verbs. This auxiliary verb will then express the conceptions of time, of person, of mood, as well as that of affirmation, which every verb had up to that time expressed on its own account. From now onwards the verb *do* is so ready for the most various utility that it can serve as auxiliary to itself.

But universality of usage has its reverse side. When *do* accompanies another verb, it is nothing more than a grammatical tool. By a division, that would seem

extremely subtle had it been made deliberately and from the first, English sets on the one side the concrete expression of the act, and on the other side the conceptions of affirmation, person, time and mood. In a dialogue such as this: *Does he consent? He doesn't*, all the movement of the action, all the grammatical apparatus, is concentrated in the auxiliary.

But it is rare for the principle of Specialisation to triumph at once. The history of languages is sown with abortive attempts and half-successes. Centuries before the verb *do* was turned into an auxiliary verb, it had already been once employed to remedy certain difficulties of conjugation. It had been found easiest, in order to form the perfect of certain verbs, to borrow the perfect of the verb *do*. In Gothic the loan was most obvious: *sôki-da*, "I searched," *sôki-dêdum*, "we searched." This is well known to be the origin of the perfect known as "weak." The attempt only half succeeded. It made a mistake in appearing in an epoch of synthesis. The auxiliary was united to the principal verb and formed with it an indissoluble whole, in such wise that the Germanic conjugation, instead of being simplified, had to reckon with an additional series of forms.

We can liken to this the fate of the future and conditional tenses in the Romance languages. We know that these languages have found in the verb *habere* an exponent as simple as it is convenient. Ovid writes in his Letters from Pontus:

*"Plura quidem mandare tibi, si quæris, habebam:
Sed timeo tardæ causa fuisse mora."*

We have here the beginning of the modern conditional. And in the following phrase taken from a sermon of St. Augustine, we find the beginning of the future tense; it is the end of the world that is in question: *Petant aut non petant, venire habet*. But the auxiliary having welded itself on to the principal verb, the attempt miscarried, at least from the point of view of the principle of Specialisation. If we go back half-a-score of centuries, we find absolutely similar attempts in imperfects such as *amabam*, in futures such as *amabo*, in perfects such as *amavi* and as *duc-si*. In this case verbs signifying "to be" (in Sanscrit *bhū* and *as*, in Latin *fu* and *esse*) join themselves on to the principal verb. But, cast into the middle of a synthetic conjugation, these auxiliaries are at once absorbed.

Finally we discover a first attempt as early as the Indo-European period. The future (in Greek *δῶσω*, in Sanscrit *dāsjāmi*) composed with the auxiliary *as*, together with the other tenses composed with the same auxiliary, are attempts which show us how often Language has had recourse to the same means, before realising at last the progress that it had in view.

CHAPTER II

THE LAW OF DIFFERENTIATION

Proofs of the existence of Differentiation—Limits of the principle of Differentiation.

WE define "Differentiation" as the intentional, ordered process by which words, apparently synonymous, and once synonyms, have nevertheless taken different meanings, and can no longer be used indiscriminately.

Has there been such Differentiation? The majority of philologists deny it. When they find themselves in the presence of facts that are too obvious to be neglected, they declare that these facts do not count: that it is a scholar's Differentiation, and in no wise a popular one, by which they are confronted. Thus they betray the same lack of psychological analysis, that we noted at the beginning, which only admits the intervention of the human will, if this will has been conscious and deliberate.

I will first draw attention to the fact that the people is not of this opinion. It admits the existence of such Differentiation; it does not believe that there exist in

Language absolutely identical terms.¹ Feeling strongly that Language is intended to serve for the exchange of ideas, for the expression of feelings, for the discussion of interests, it refuses to believe in a synonymy that would be both useless and dangerous. Now as the people is at once the depository and author of Language, the fact that it denies the existence of synonyms actually brings about their speedy disappearance: either they are differentiated, or else one of the two terms ceases to exist.

All the discredit that has been thrown on this subject arises from the distinctions attempted in private by self-constituted would-be doctors of Language. There are no good distinctions, excepting those that come about without premeditation, under the pressure of circumstance, by sudden inspiration, and in face of real need, through men concerned with the things themselves. The distinctions that are made by the people are the only true and the only good ones. No sooner does it see things, than it associates words with them. We will give some examples.

Whenever two languages or even two dialects find themselves face to face, a process of classification takes place, which consists in attributing degrees to synonymous expressions. According as an idiom is considered superior or inferior, these terms are seen to increase or diminish in dignity. The question of the Science of Language is at bottom a social or national question. M.

¹ From this arises the question so often heard: What is the difference . . . ?

J. Gilliéron describes the effects produced through the invasion of a Swiss dialect by French.¹ In proportion as a French word is adopted, the Patois vocable, degraded and driven back, becomes vulgar and trivial. Formerly a room was called *paillé*: since the word *chambre* has come into the village, *paillé* means a garret. In Brittany, says the Abbé Rousselot, gardens were formerly called *courtils*: now that the word *jardin* is known, a shade of contempt adheres to the rustic word. It matters little that the two terms had the same origin. The Savoyard uses the names of *père* and *mère* for his parents, while he keeps for his cattle the old words *pâré* and *mâré*. Among the Romans, *coquina* signified "kitchen": the Oscan *popina*, which is the same word, meant a common tavern.

It will perhaps be said that these words are naturally differentiated by the things they designate, and that they have never been compared. This would be to maintain that the popular mind is incapable of perceiving two things at once. I think on the contrary that there has been comparison, and that the popular term owes to this comparison a downfall which would otherwise be incomprehensible. In the matter of Language, significance is the great regulator of the memory; in order to fix themselves in our minds, new words need to be associated with some word of kindred sense. The people therefore has its synonyms, which it arranges and subordinates according to its own ideas. In proportion as new words are learnt, these are inserted among the

¹ *Le patois de la Commune de Vionnaz (Bas-Valais)*, in the *Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études*, 1880.

words that are already known. It is not surprising that these latter suffer a certain depreciation, a recoil. So long as populations mix with each other, there will be fresh examples of Differentiation. To prevent this, you must put a customs-duty on Language or employ the closure.

What the people does by instinct is done with the same spontaneity by all growing science, by all searching analysis, by every discussion that desires to attain an end, by every opinion that wishes to be recognised and defined. Plato, wishing to combat the ideas of the Ionian school, reproaches Thales with having confounded the *principles* or ἀρχαί with the *elements* or στοιχεῖα. Now, the *elements* are water, fire, earth, air, while the *principles* are things of a more general and imperishable nature, such as numbers. The distinction thus made by the Greek thinker, though philosophical and profound, is of the same kind as the distinctions quoted above, at least from the point of view of the Science of Language. By an immediate apperception, the two words, till then synonymous, were differentiated. Are we to place facts of this nature outside the history of Language? In so doing we should run the risk of restricting it on its most important side. The history of Language is a series of differentiations. That, and that alone, took place at the birth of languages. That, and that alone, takes place at the first lisps of a child; for it is by Differentiation that he applies little by little to distinct objects the syllables which he at first scatters impartially upon everything that he meets.

Let us now turn to some effects of Differentiation in an ancient epoch of our languages.

The root *man* seems to have served in the beginning to designate vaguely all the operations of the soul ; for we find it expressing thought (*mens*), memory (*memini*, μέμνημαι, μιμνήσκω), passion (μένος), and even perhaps madness (μανία).¹ But a less rudimentary psychology introduced some order into this confusion, keeping certain words, evicting others to be replaced by synonyms, giving in short to each one its special domain. Such a sifting was not done by chance. Rather might we here recapitulate, with especial force on a purely human and historical ground, the whole argument of Fenelon.

We are in the habit of drawing a distinction between the active courage which goes out to meet danger and to fight with it, and the passive courage which bears evil fortune with an equable mind. Although capable of existing in the same man, these are, at bottom, two distinct qualities, as can be seen by observing the extremes to which each are led by exaggeration. Active courage pushed too far ends in foolhardiness ; passive courage carried beyond due measure degenerates into apathy.

We might have expected that Language would have registered so natural a distinction from the very first ; but it was not so. In the language of Homer, the two conceptions seem to be confounded with one another, and the same verb *τολμάω*, which means to *dare* means also to *bear* ; the same adjective *τλήμων*, which means

¹ A. Meillet, *De Indo-Europæa radice men*, Paris, Bouillon, 1897.

patient means also *bold*. After Homer, gnomic poetry furnishes us with other examples of this confusion—

"It is necessary to bear that which the gods send to mortals," says a proverb.

Τολμᾶν χρὴ τὰ διδοῦσι θεοὶ θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.¹

And elsewhere—"Be enduring in misfortune, O my soul, even when thou sufferest unendurable things."

Τόλμα, θυμὲ, κακοῖσιν, ὅμως ἄτλητα πεπονθώς.²

It was therefore by a tardy distinction that boldness (and boldness pushed even to the verge of rashness and insolence) was confided to *τολμάω* and its family, while constancy and resignation fell to the lot of *τάλας* and of *λήμων*.³

No one would now dream of expressing by the same word two ideas so different as the pleasure of the senses and the ideal pleasure caused by the subjective feeling of hope. Yet there was a time when the same expression served for the two ideas. The Greek tongue drew from this root a series of words expressing hope—*ἐλπις*, *ἐλπίζω*, *ἐλπομαι*. Latin took from it the words that denote pleasure—*volupe*, *voluptas*.⁴ The idea left unrepresented found, on either side, other symbols: *ἡδονή* (from *ἡδομαι* "to enjoy") became in Greek the name for

¹ *Il.*, xx. 19; *Od.* xxiv. 162, etc.

² *Theognis*, v. 591, 1,029.

³ In modern languages, the root *tol* contained in *τολμάω*, served in German to designate *patience* (*Ge-dul-a*). It reappears also in the Latin *tolerare*.

⁴ The verb **ἐλπω* began with a *v* or *f*, as is seen by the perfect **Εολπα* (for *Ἔφολπα*).

pleasure, and in Latin *spes*, "respiration, relief," the name for hope.

It is in this way that, going back into the past, one finds on the way semantic conglomerates which have needed centuries to distinguish. And the process is not finished even to-day. In French the difference between *sentir* (to feel) and *penser* (to think) is now marked in the verbs, but hardly appears in the substantive *sentiment*. Similarly, the adjective *sensible* which in French belongs to the soul, has in English taken the meaning of "intelligent, reasonable." It is well known that in Latin *sentir* pertains rather to thought, as is seen by compounds such as *dissentio*, *consentio*, and by derivatives such as *sententia*.

Owing to a confusion that has not yet wholly disappeared, ancient languages expressed by the same word the "wicked" and the "unhappy." The adjective *πονηρός* has the double meaning.¹ In the childhood of societies, the poor were objects of aversion as much as of pity: it is in this tone that Homer speaks of beggars. Little by little *πονηρός* abandoned this double meaning, and was exclusively applied to the idea of perversity, while its congener *πένης* designated the pauper.

The nearer words approximate in form, the more do they invite Differentiation. Here is a sentence, at first sight extraordinary enough, that has been preserved for us by Varro—*Religentem esse oportet, religiosum nefas*.

¹ Πονηρὰ ἰσπάρια, πονηρὸν ὕψος, ἔδαρ. Πονηρὰ πράγματα. From the same root that has supplied πόνος, "trouble"; πένια, "poverty"; πένουμαι, "to be a pauper." Cf. the double sense of *méchant* in French.

The two words *religens* and *religiosus*, etymologically synonymous, are opposed to each other. The meaning of the proverb is that religion is a good thing, but that superstition is not. There is a certain elegance, to which the people is by no means insensible, in thus differentiating words that have almost the same sound.¹

The needs of thought are the first agent of Differentiation. Thus it was that Greek and German met in making the distinction between *Mann* and *Mensch*, between *άνήρ* and *άνθρωπος*.

Between *άνήρ* and *άνθρωπος* there was originally no difference of meaning: the one signified "man," the other "he who has the face of a man." Homer, speaking of the Ethiopians who inhabit the ends of the earth, calls them *εσχάτοι άνδρών*. But, owing to an antithesis, the opportunity for which could not fail to arise, they have little by little been distinguished one from the other, and placed in opposition. Herodotus, speaking of the army of the Persians, says that at Thermopylae Xerxes could perceive *ότι πολλοί μὲν άνθρωποι εἶεν, ὀλίγοι δὲ άνδρες*. The distinction became in this way familiar to the Greeks. Xenophon, speaking of the love of glory which constitutes the worth of life, adds that by this men recognise each other: *άνδρες καὶ οὐκέτι άνθρωποι μόνον νομιζόμενοι*. Nothing, either in the etymological meaning of *άνήρ*, or in that of *άνθρωπος*, predestined them to this opposition.²

We shall come back to this point in the chapter on Analogy.
the adjective (*άνθρωπος* having first been an adjective) that

When the popular mind has once devised a certain kind of Differentiation, it is naturally tempted to complete the series. It is well known that there are languages in which the various acts of life are not designated in the same way if an exalted personage be concerned, as when the ordinary man is in question. The Cambodgians do not designate the members of the body nor the daily operations of life by the same terms when speaking of the king, as when speaking of a mere individual. To express that a man eats, they used the word *si*; in speaking of a chief, they would say *pisa*; if they spoke of a bonze or of a king, it would be *soi*. In speaking to an inferior, "me" is expressed by *anh*; to a superior, by *knhom*; to a bonze, by *chhan*.¹ The followers of Zoroaster, who regarded the world as divided between two opposing powers, had a double vocabulary, according to whether they spoke of a creature of Ormuzd, or of a creature of Ahriman. In these examples we see Differentiation leaving an impress more or less profound; as one observes certain habits of mind, barely noticeable in one man, governing the whole life of another.

Nothing, in truth, is more natural or more necessary than Differentiation, since our intelligence gathers in

takes the most general signification. It is the same with *Mann* and *Mensch*. It is the same also in French with *les hommes* and *les humains* (men and human beings).

¹ There is something of the same kind in English, but only in a rudimentary state. To mark the difference between men and animals there are *mouth* and *muzzle*, *nose* and *snout*, etc. It is obvious that etymology has had nothing to do with this.

words of different epochs and different surroundings, and would be wholly given over to confusion if it did not keep a certain order among them. What is done by collections of synonyms is done by us all: when terms distinguished or subordinated by common usage are examined, it is seen that etymology rarely justifies the differences that we attribute to them. Take for example the words *species* and *kind*: for what reason has a wider meaning been given to the former than to the latter? To *branch* than to *class*? Take the words *division*, *brigade*, *regiment*, *battalion*; these technical terms, so exactly subordinated each to the others, have no distinguishing feature that specially fits them for this or that place. Perhaps we should find the same thing were it possible for us to go back to the epoch in which the series of the nouns of number was first formed.

In passing from material to moral ideas, we shall see still better the effects of Differentiation. Between *esteem*, *respect*, *veneration*, no gradation imposed by etymology can be perceived. To establish certain distinctions, there were needed exact and precise minds, and a society which was well regulated and observant of gradations: but that is no reason for leaving these distinctions outside the history of Language. We know but little about the *creation* of Language; but Differentiation is the true demiurge thereof. Differentiation has been that second creation, that *melior natura*, of which Ovid speaks when retracing the successive ages of the world.

Differentiation, however, like all the *laws* that we are passing in review, has its limits.

Obviously it must first find a material in which to work. As it does not create, but only attaches itself to what is, in order to use and perfect it, the terms to be differentiated must already exist in the language. We could instance certain confusions, of which, for lack of a word, even the most perfect idioms have never succeeded in ridding themselves.

Inversely the mind does not always manage to fertilise all the riches proffered to it by Language. Grammatical mechanism, by the combination of existing elements, can produce such a wealth of forms as to embarrass the intelligence. Georges Curtius has counted that the number of personal forms of the Greek verb amounts to two hundred and sixty-eight, a very considerable number, though still much inferior in quantity to that of the Sanscrit verb which reaches to eight hundred and ninety-one. But Differentiation has not been able to turn this abundance to account, though it is already much that the Greek tongue should have known how to differentiate its four preterites (imperfect, aorist, perfect, pluperfect). Between the first and second futures and between [the first and second perfects, the most attentive observation has failed to discover any semantic distinction. Added to this over-production of tenses, we find an over-production of verbs. If we take for example the root *φνγ*, "to flee," we find by the side of *φεύγω* a verb *φνγγάνω*, which has the same meaning. By the side of *φημί* we find

φάσκω. By the side of *πῖμπλημι*, we find *πλήθω*. The single verb signifying "to extend" is represented by *τένω*, *τιταίνω* and *τανύω*. We have *βαίνω*, *βίβημι*, and *βάσκω*, all three of which signify "to walk." The Extinction of useless forms¹ fortunately diminishes the weight of this dead capital.

Another limit to the principle of Differentiation is set by the greater or less progress of civilisation. There are shades of meaning which arise only among cultivated peoples. Through synonymy we learn with what objects the thought of a nation has been chiefly preoccupied. Distinctions are first made by a few minds that are more subtle than others: then they become the common property of all. Intellect, as has been said, consists in seeing differences in similar things. This intellect is communicated up to a certain point by Language, for by recognising the distinctions, which the most gifted alone perceived at first, the mental sight of each individual becomes more piercing.

One question that concerns rather the philosopher than the philologist is this: how does this Differentiation come about in us? Or, to put it somewhat crudely, but intelligibly, have we in our heads a dictionary of synonyms? I think that in able and observant minds this dictionary does exist, but that it only opens in case of necessity and at the master's call. Sometimes the right word springs forth at the first signal. At other times it has to be waited for: then the latent dictionary is opened, and displays successively the synonyms that it holds in reserve, until the desired term be revealed.

¹ See at the end of the first part.

CHAPTER III

IRRADIATION

What is to be understood by this word—Irradiation can create grammatical inflections.

WE designate by this term, for want of a better, a series of facts that has not yet been named. To tell the truth, it has so far been barely noticed, though it is of real importance for the psychology of Language.¹

A few examples will make the subject clear.

Latin verbs in *-sco*, such as *maturesco*, *marcesco*, are commonly called “inchoatives,” because they appear to denote a beginning of action, or an action that comes about gradually. But this shade of meaning did not belong originally to the inflection *-sco*. It is not to be found in *nosco*, “I know”; *scisco*, “I decide”; *pasco*, “I nourish,” etc. Neither does it exist in cognate languages.²

¹ We must however except the two American scholars, Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Lanman, from whose works we shall quote further on. M. Ludwig first drew attention to this question, under the name of Adaptation.

² Cf. in Greek *εὕρισκω*, “I find,” *τιτρώσκω*, “I wound,” *διδράσκω*,

From whence then has Latin taken it? It comes from such verbs as *adolesco*, *flor~~es~~co*, *senesco*, etc. A man does not grow up, flourish, or grow old in a moment; and the idea of a slow and gradual action having thus first been introduced into these verbs, it appeared afterwards to be inherent in the suffix. It was irradiated into it.

Something similar happened with the verbs known as desideratives, such as *esurio*, *nupturio*, *empturio*. If they follow the rare conjugation in *-io*, it is, in my opinion, because they have modelled themselves on *sitio*, "to be thirsty." The syllable that precedes the inflection is—in spite of the difference of quantity—nothing but the suffix *-tor* or *-sor*, which forms so many substantives in Latin: *emptor*, "buyer"; *scriptor*, "writer"; *esor* (for *ed-tor*), "eater."¹ The desiderative note has so thoroughly entered into this inflection, that Cicero, writing to Atticus, could say of Pompey with no fear of misunderstanding: *sullaturit animus ejus et proscripturit*.

We might here recall a discussion of the last century that shows how easy it is to make a mistake on this point: the etymology—true or false—of an inflection is more readily given than its birth and propagation are traced. On the subject of these verbs in *urive*, the

"I run," etc. In Homer, *σκω* is added indifferently to all verbs. See for example, *Odyssey*, xvii. 331, 335, xviii. 324, etc. This same inflection is also to be found in Sanscrit, but not to any greater degree in the inchoative sense.

¹ There is a difference of quantity, the suffix *-tor* having originally had a long *o* or a short *o*, according to its position. Cf. in Greek *πῆτορ* *πῆτοπος*.

President de Brosses, in his *Méchanique des Langues*, wrote: "The Latin termination *-urire* is appropriated to a keen and ardent desire to do something: *micturire*, *esurire*, from which it appears that it was fundamentally formed on the word *urere* and on the root *ur*, which in so many languages signifies fire. Thus the termination *-urire* was well chosen to designate a burning desire." Voltaire, clearer of vision, protests. Scenting one of those theories to which the President was so prone, he makes objections. "Where is the idea of burning in verbs such as *scaturire*, 'to well up'? . . . This little system is much in fault; a fresh reason for distrusting systems."

There exists in Greek a group of verbs ending in *ιαω*, that express a disease of the body or the soul: *ὀδοντιάω*, "to have toothache," from *ὀδούς*, "tooth"; *σπληνιάω*, "to suffer in one's spleen," from *σπλήν*, "spleen"; *λάρυγγιάω*, "to have a sore throat," from *λάρυγξ*, "throat." The sense of disease seems so truly inherent in these verbs, that the inflection has been added to words of all kinds: *μόλυβδος*, "lead," *μολυβδιάω*, "to be leaden-hued"; *λίθος*, "stone," *λιθιάω*, "to have the disease of stone." Moreover, variations on the same model have been fabricated: *φυλλιάω* (in speaking of a tree), "to produce only leaves"; *ἐλλεβοριάω*, "to need hellebore"; *στρατηγιάω*, "to have the disease of wishing to be a strategist."

The idea of disease has now entered into this inflection, but it was by no means there originally. The starting-

point must be looked for in certain substantives in *ια*, such as *ὀφθαλμία*, "ophthalm^α"; *μελαγχολία*, "melancholia."¹ It was from this that the movement originated: a movement which has produced a group that might be called the nosological group.

Let us now quote an example taken from French. There is a pejorative suffix *-âtre*, which forms words such as *marâtre*, *bellâtre*, *douceâtre*. The history of this suffix is instructive, but we must take it up rather far back.

Its birthplace is to be found in the Greek language, where there were verbs in *αζω* with no disparaging signification: *θαυμάζω*, "I admire"; *σπουδάζω*, "I apply myself"; *σχολάζω*, "I take leisure." From thence arose the substantives in *αστηρ*, such as *δικαστήρ*, "judge"; *ἐργαστήρ*, "workman." Among these, we already see certain words of suspicious appearance: *πατραστήρ*, "he who plays the father"; *μητράστειρα*, "she who plays the mother"; *ἐλαιαστήρ*, "that which counterfeits the olive-tree" (that is to say, the wild olive).

This class of words pleased the Romans. As a general rule, it may be noticed that everything that appeals to malignity passes easily from one people to another. The Latin tongue had, therefore, the words *patraster*, *filiaster*. Cicero, in his correspondence, coins the vocable *Fulviaster*, "he who imitates Fulvius, a second Fulvius." From Latin, the formation in *aster* passed to the

¹ This formation in *ια*, however, does not in itself imply anything of the kind: *ἁρμονία*, "union"; *διδασκαλία*, "teaching"; *μεσημβρία* "noon," etc.

derivative languages, in which it had a great success. All the Romance languages use it. French has taken possession of it, and employs it with more licence than ever did Greek or Latin. *Roussâtre, verdâtre, saumâtre, opiniâtre, médicâtre*, are in common usage. The pejorative sense, which barely existed in Greek, but which begins to show in Latin, has therefore definitely entered into this suffix.

Modern German has a class of verbs that may be called "depreciative," for they express the action coupled with a suggestion of disesteem and irony. They are terminated in *eln*. Thus of *klug*, "clever," is made *klugeln*, "to pretend to be clever, to split straws"; of *witz*, "wit," is made *witzeln*, "to try to be witty, to talk nonsense"; of *fromm*, "pious," is made *frommeln*, "to cant." Sometimes the verb in *eln* is taken directly from another verb, *deuten*, "to interpret"; *deuteln*, "to gloss." The depreciative idea entered as an afterthought into this inflection, which had originally no disparaging signification. The formation in *-eln* comes from ancient substantives in *-el*, as is seen by *Zweifel* and *zweifeln*, *Sattel* and *satteln*, *Wechsel* and *wechseln*, *Handel* and *handeln*. But as among these substantives there were some with a diminutive sense, such as *Würfel*, "thimble": *Schnitzel*, "shaving, shred"; *Äugel*, "ocellus," this circumstance has sufficed to imbue the verbal inflection with a special savour. To say that these are products of Analogy is an insufficient explanation. The popular mind has multiplied these verbs because Irradiation had

given them a special signification.¹ The diminutive idea is itself, if I may so say, an afterthought. The suffixes which, in Greek or Latin, were used to form diminutives did not in the beginning possess this meaning. But once they have acquired it, they are indefinitely propagated. The fecundity displayed by Latin on this point is well known. Like a gardener who applies himself to variegating a flower adopted by fashion, the popular mind, once imbued with the taste, produces diminutives of all shapes.² We then see the diminutive suffix attach itself even to pronouns; *ullus* (for *unulus*), *singuli*, *ningulus* are examples of this. Everybody knows the richness of Italian in this respect. Something similar may be observed in certain dialects of modern German.³

Irradiation may become a source of error to the philologist, if he persists in trying to find in the word the textual statement of what it conveys to the mind. I know scarcely any significative suffix, of which some scholar has not attempted an explanation, by means of a substantive or verb. Quite recently the verb *memini* was detected in *monumentum*, *argumentum*.⁴ Pott, again,

¹ Similar observations might be made on French words ending in *iller*, such as *sautiller*, in *etté*, such as *tachetté*, etc.

² To give examples: *Animula*, *apicula*, *avunculus*, *angellus*, *corolla*, *bacillum*, etc. A diminutive is the basis of *somnolentus*, *fraudulentus*, *violare* . . .

³ See Grimm, *Grammaire allemande*, iii. 688.

⁴ It is well known that the suffix *mentum* is the development of *men*: *augmen*, *augmentum*; *segmen*, *segmentum*.

tried to discover in patronymics such as Ἀποείδης, Πηλείδης, the substantive εἶδος, "appearance," although names like Πριαμίδης, Τελαμωνιάδης, in which the same suffix appears in a different form, should have suggested some doubt to him. In the same way, Corssen thought that he discerned a verb *kar*, "to make," in such words as *volucer* or *ambulacrum*, a root *bhar*, "to bear," in *celeber*, *cribrum*.

It is true that the mistake made by scholars is made also by the people. But it must be confessed that the popular mind deceives itself with a finer ingenuity. The English *sweet-heart*, written as if it meant, "my sweet heart," is formed with the same suffix as *niggard*, *sluggard*, *coward*. It should therefore be written *sweetard*, "sweetish."¹ But *sweet-heart* has certainly more colour.

Similarly, in German, adjectives like *trübselig*, *armselig*, give now the impression of being derived from *Seele*, "soul," whereas they are the development of an abstract suffix—*sal*, which is preserved in *trübsal*, *mühsal*. The impression is so general that adjectives such as *arbeit-selig*, *vertrauenselig*, seem to be formed quite regularly, and that *seelenarm* has been constructed in imitation of *armselig*.

There exists in Latin a form of participle intended, if we are to believe the grammars, to express the idea of obligation. It is found sometimes in the active: *Nunc est bibendum*.—*Denegandum est exceptionem*.—*Dandum est operam*; sometimes in the passive: *Asperum et vix*

¹ Sayce, *Introduction to the Science of Language*, ii. 346.

ferendum.—*Urbem dux militibus diripiendam dedit.*—*Danda opera est.* But whatever the construction, the grammars assert—and the impression that we have of the Latin would confirm their assertion—that a conception of obligation is contained in the participle. This conception of obligation has nevertheless made its entry after the fact. In fact, the participles in *dus*, *da*, *dum*, as well as the corresponding gerundives, expressed originally nothing more than the idea of action, whether passive or active. This is clearly shown by the ancient official formulas. “Were present at the drawing up of the act” was expressed in Latin by: *scribendo adfuerunt*. “Presided at the execution of the work” was expressed by: *præfuit operi faciundo*.¹ Latin writers have left us, moreover, a fair number of examples of this purely active or passive sense. Livy relates how the Gauls were hewn in pieces while receiving the gold for the ransom of Rome: *inter accipiendum aurum cæsi sunt*. Cicero, in his *De Officiis*, speaks successively of injustice committed or suffered. He ends the first part with these words: *de inferenda injuria satis dictum est*; “Enough has been said of injustices committed by oneself.”

I have purposely multiplied the examples on account of the false ideas which still prevail on this point.² Necessity is but a subsidiary shade of meaning which

¹ Or even by *operis faciundo* (Orelli, 5757), making *faciundum* a neuter substantive, similar in meaning to the French *confection*.

² The true solution has been given by M. L. Havet. The examples have been collected by our lamented pupil, S. Dosson.

has penetrated by supererogation into forms of this kind. To explain how it has so penetrated, certain formulas such as: *Decemviri creati sunt legibus scribundis.*—*Quattuor viri viarum curandarum*, must be considered.

If in these formulas a substantive be put in the place of the verb, the sense remains the same. Yet the substantive contains in itself nothing that indicates the idea of obligation.

Everybody knows the distinction made by Philology between the "material" and the "formal" element in words. In every age it has been asked whether these two elements had the same origin, or whether there is between them some difference of nature. I need not at present discuss this subject. I only wish to show that we may happen to consider as belonging to the "formal element" letters or syllables taken from the "material element." This is a phenomenon of Irradiation.

We are furnished with an example by the Greek perfects in *κα* such as *λέλυκα, πεφίληκα*. Georges Curtius, with rare perspicacity, has shown that this *κ* is in no way different from the *c* of *facio, jacio*, and that it is still enclosed in the "material" part of the word in certain verbs such as *ἤκω, ἐρύκω, ὀλέκω*.¹ The fact of its being neighbour to the inflection sufficed to transform it into

De Participii Gerundivi Significatione, Hachette, 1887. See also what I said in the *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique*, viii. 307.

¹ See his *Grundzüge*, 5th edition, p. 61. M. Ascoli had already conjectured something similar. It is the same *c* that we find in Latin in *fecundus, jucundus*.

an inflection itself. To call such a phenomenon "attraction," or "adherence," is to name without explaining it. The need of a clear and convenient exponent has brought about this metamorphosis: it has caused the incorporation in inflection of what did not previously belong to it, and has enriched the formal at the expense of the material element. It was in certain perfects like *δέδωκα*, *έστηκα*, that the process began. But when once the *κ* had become a significative element, it entered into all verbs.

Here are two examples taken from the other end of the history of Indo-European languages. Mr. Wheeler tells us that the Americans find means to provide a singular for words taken rightly or wrongly for plurals, such as *Chinese*, *Portuguese*. Corresponding to *Chinese* they have made a singular *Chinee*; corresponding to *Portuguese*, they have made a singular *Portuguee*. In this way the inflection *se* passes to the condition of a "formal" element.¹

To hear German spoken, it might be thought that there exists a second person of the verb ending in *e*: *Da biste?*—*Lebste auch noch?*—*Was meinst?*—*Jetzt hast's*. The origin of this *e* is not doubtful: it is plainly a remainder of the pronoun of the second person *du*, of which the consonant has become extinct, and the vowel embodied in the verb. But if these second persons came down to us from a remote age, the vowel would be taken for the remnant of an inflection.

¹ It would appear even that for the French word *chaise*, a singular *shay* has been found. Wheeler, *Analogy*, p. 14.

These examples, one of which takes us back to the earliest periods of the Greek tongue, while the other two are of our own time, show that borrowings take place between the formal and the material elements, Irradiation being the cause of this process of transformation.

CHAPTER IV

SURVIVAL OF INFLECTIONS

What this is—Examples drawn from French grammar—Archaism.

WHEN an inflection disappears, whether through the action of phonetic laws, or for any other reason, it does not follow that it will cease to exist for the mind. There it may still live a long time, thanks partly to tradition, partly to the position occupied by the word in the phrase, partly also to the comparisons which our memory instinctively makes with analogous constructions. This Survival of the inflection is not an unimportant matter, nor is it without influence upon the syntax.

This will become clearer from a few examples.

There exists in French grammar a rule which may at first sight appear arbitrary, but which none the less rests on a sound instinct of the language. A word may not be used as complement to two verbs which require different cases. Even if the word in question is outwardly identical for both cases, the prohibition holds good. It is not permissible to say, for

instance: "*Vous savez que je vous ai toujours respecté et porté une vive affection.*"

Whence comes this prohibition? It comes from the Survival, in the background of our minds, of a declension that has been practically abolished. The idea of the dative, which continues to exist among us, admits no mixing with the accusative, although, in the present example, dative and accusative are identical in form. The rule, I repeat, is not artificial: we are all conscious of it, in reading the faulty phrase. The fact is that there is a reminiscence which serves us as guide. Were the phrase transferred to the third person, it would be found necessary to say: "*Vous savez que je le respecte et lui porte une vive affection.*" The recollection, partially present to the memory, of *le* and *lui* prevents the confusion of the two *vous*.

For the same reason, it is necessary to repeat the pronoun, although the pronoun does not change in the phrase: "*Je te remercie et te serre la main.*"¹ Thus an inflection that has been destroyed still continues to influence the mind, owing to association with a similar form.

It may be said that by means of a few precious fragments of this kind the declension of pronouns survives almost complete in the French language. The

¹ In his *Remarques sur la Langue Française* Vaugelas mentions this rule: "This rule," he says, "is a very good one, and most conducive to the purity and clearness of the language." Guillaume de Humboldt again expresses the same thing in these terms: "Es sinken die Formen, nicht aber die Form, die vielmehr ihren alten Geist über die neuen Umgestaltungen ausgoss."

dative continues to make itself felt in such phrases as: "*accorde-moi ta protection, donne-toi du repos, ne nous faisons pas d'illusions, n'allez pas vous chercher des regrets.*"

The accusative exists in a like manner. It would be somewhat wounding to our internal syntax, were we to say, in one single phrase: "*Où se sont cachés, qui a dispersé nos amis?*"

Another Latin form that still survives, although seemingly extinct, is the neuter. Perhaps, even, the French use it more than the Latins. They say: "*Le beau, le vrai, le bien, l'honnête, l'utile, l'agréable, l'infini, l'intelligible, le contingent, le nécessaire, l'absolu, le divin.*" Their philosophical language is full of it. Their literary criticism also, "*le fin, le délicat, le romanesque, l'atroce.*" "*Xavier de Maistre,*" says Sainte-Beuve, "*a trouvé sa place par le naïf, le sensible et le charmant.*" La Bruyère speaking of Rabelais: "*Où il est mauvais, il passe bien au delà du pire. . . . Où il est bon, il va jusqu'à l'exquis et à l'excellent.*"

This faculty of employing adjectives in a gender that seems to have dropped out of the language, is connected with the presence of a certain number of neuter pronouns that have been saved from the wreck, to wit *le* ("*je ne le souffrirai pas, me le pardonnerez vous?*"), *ce* ("*ce fut la cause de ses malheurs, ce n'est pas qu'il soit méchant, c'est à vous de commencer . . .*"), *que* ("*que ferons-nous, que vous en semble?*"), *quoi* ("*quoi de plus insensé, un je ne sais quoi . . .*"). These words, and a

few other similar ones, have been sufficient to maintain the neuter gender in the mind and in the language, and to allow it an extension that is by no means coming to an end. We even see that feminine substantives, such as *quelque chose*, *rien*, have lost their gender and turned into neuters.

There is also an example of Survival apart from pronouns. The French language has lost its declension, and yet continues to use absolute ablatives. "*Lui mort, toutes nos espérances sont anéanties.*" "*La nouvelle s'étant répandue, des attroupements se formèrent.*" What have we here other than absolute propositions after the manner of the Latins? Before a construction of this kind, our logical analysis is at a loss. This is one of the examples which show how difficult it is to disconnect a language from its origins, and how great would become the obscurity of the French language were it no longer illuminated by the light of Latin.

Another example is the genitive, which, as is well known, persisted for a long time in certain expressions: *l'Hôtel-Dieu*, *le parvis Notre-Dame*, *les quatre fils Aymon*. But, as will be seen in a moment, this construction, having become obscure, was transformed by the popular intelligence.

These survivals are instructive, because they allow us to infer that it was in no way different with ancient languages, and that where we find some unexplained interdiction or toleration, we are perhaps in presence of the protracted action of a former state of things. It is

thus no doubt that must be interpreted the rule known by the formula of τὰ ζῶα τρέχει.

The law of Survival, like the law of Differentiation,¹ has its limits. When an inflection is no longer represented save by a small number of specimens, and when these specimens have themselves become unrecognisable, human intelligence, deprived of guidance, no longer knows whither to turn. An instinctive prudence, the product of many unsuccessful attempts, causes the abandonment of constructions that have become too difficult to understand. It rarely happens that the people fails in this precaution. What it does not understand, it abandons or transforms.

It has, for instance, transformed the genitive construction of which mention has just been made. In expressions such as: *Regent Street, Queen Anne's Gate*, etc., it is no longer a genitive that we perceive: we imagine ourselves to be pronouncing the very name of these public thoroughfares. Thus a construction has been formed and most widely developed to which we owe for the most part the names of our streets, of our squares, and of our parks, not to mention a thousand industrial inventions.

It may happen that these survivals are preserved in the language of literature, after they have disappeared from the language of the people. It is in this way that poetry has kept the habit of *inversions*, which are nothing but a licence of ancient days. So long as they do not detract

¹ See above, p. 37.

from lucidity, these relics of a former age are precious : they endow the language with dignity, grace and power. But the deviation must not be too great. If the licence of syntax supposes the existence of inflections long since abolished or forgotten, a certain obscurity cannot fail to result. The most subtle form of *archaism* is to appeal to grammatical methods that no longer exist in the popular consciousness. If it be comparatively easy to restore ancient words to circulation, it is much more difficult to revive and render intelligible the ancient turns of phrase. Survival is therefore a law of Language, whose true limits every one must measure, in due accordance with the idiom and the occasion.¹

¹ See what I said on the subject of German in my book, *De l'enseignement des langues vivantes*, p. 65.

CHAPTER V

FALSE PERCEPTIONS

False inflections of the plural—False inflections of cases—
Apophonia.

WE are thus led on to speak of a phenomenon nearly related to the preceding one: "False Perception."

We often imagine that we perceive an inflection where none exists. Thus an Englishman, pronouncing the plural *oxen*, thinks that in the syllable *en* he recognises the distinguishing mark of number; yet this is merely the Anglo-Saxon stem *oxen*; Sanscrit, *ukṣan*. The real mark of the plural has been dropped.

It is easy to see the source of this illusion. It is that the singular, having lost half its stem, is reduced to the syllable *ox*. Thenceforward there is a difference between the singular and the plural which serves to denote number. The people has a feeling for utility, but does not trouble at all about history. It uses whatever it possesses: if it suffers losses, it utilises what is left. It introduces a meaning into syllables that were meaningless. Its Perception is therefore false from the point of

view of history, but from the point of view of history alone.

The same example may serve for German. It has even come to pass that the German language has been so convinced of the existence of an inflection, that it has mobilised and made liberal use of it. Not only does it decline: *der Ochs, die Ochsen*, but it makes also: *der Mensch, die Menschen*, and even, declining words of foreign origin, *der Soldat, die Soldaten*.

But German possesses another syllable, the history of which is yet more instructive. When we are told that in the plural *Kind* makes *Kinder*, we are given to understand that *er* is the inflection of the plural; yet *er* is nothing more than the suffix *es* or *er* that we have in the Latin *gener-is*, in the Greek γένε(σ)-os. Which fact however has not prevented a whole category of words from imitating this model: *die Weiber, die Lämmer, die Dächer, die Bücher, die Götter*. It may therefore be said that the instinct which at the present day brings about the recognition of a plural termination in *Kind-er, Weib-er, Haus-er*, is from the point of view of history a False Perception; this however has not prevented its becoming a regular inflection of the language.¹

Facts of this kind are easier to observe in modern than in ancient languages. The reason is easily guessed, for it consists in nothing but the lack of anterior documents.

¹ The English word *child*, which formerly made in the plural *cildru, cildre*, has added on to this the syllable *en*: *children*. On the original identity of *Kind* and *child*, see the *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique*, vol. vii. p. 445.

Still, in Latin the *e* of *dulce, nobīe*, appears to be the sign of the neuter, although the neuter is simply recognisable by the absence of inflection. We have only to compare the Greek ἴδις, neuter ἴδι, or εὐχαρίς, neuter εὐχαρι, to see that the *e* of *dulce* occupies the place of an ancient termination *i*. Were it possible to question a contemporary of Augustus on his impression of words like *onus, scelus*, he would no doubt say that the syllable *us* is there to mark the inflection. The Greek thought that in the imperfect ἔλνε, in the aorist ἔλνε, he discerned the third person, albeit the mark of this third person (a *t*) had disappeared.

Another kind of False Perception is a belief in the presence of grammatical forms which have never existed. In Latin, the declension is shorter by one case in the plural than in the singular: to wit, the dative and ablative possess, and probably have always possessed, a single plural inflection. Yet this deficiency is not felt. So little is it felt that philologists are not yet agreed as to which of the two cases is missing.

We have just seen that the loss of an inflection may add to the significative value of that which survives. The well-known phenomena of *Umlaut* and *Ablaut* draw from that fact the greater part of their importance.

It is recognised that the difference of vowel between *man* and *men*, between *Vater* and *Väter*, is by no means primitive, but that the "softening" of *a* into *e* or *ä* is due to the influence of a final syllable originally present but later on abolished by the wear and tear of ages. This difference of vowel is sufficient to distinguish the

plural from the singular. It possesses indeed all the greater value in that it is alone at the present day in marking an important grammatical relation. Could it but have been introduced universally, this manner of denoting the plural would have had the merit of elegance and brevity.

It is impossible to consider the difference between *man* and *men* without thinking at once of the difference that exists in conjugation between the diverse tenses of certain verbs: *sing*, *sang*, *sung*. Here also the present instinct of Language is not in agreement with history. It would seem as if this variety of vowels had been invented expressly to mark the variety of tenses. Yet that is not the case: by going back a few centuries, it may be proved that it is only the accompaniment of other exponents, which are the significative and veritable exponents. The diversity of vowels is produced by secondary causes, causes of accentuation or of contraction. But the idea suggested by modern language, is that the change of *i* into *a* is intended to indicate the preterite, and that the change of *i* into *u* is made to mark the participle. Though not significative in its origin, this change of vowel has ended by becoming significative. Perhaps even there may be a more intimate connection between this advent of meaning and the downfall of the flecional apparatus, for it may be suspected that the people does not abandon what is useful to it, until conscious that it already possesses a substitute.

CHAPTER VI

ANALOGY

False idea of Analogy—Cases in which Language allows itself to be guided by Analogy—(a) To avoid some difficulty—(b) To obtain greater clearness—(c) To emphasise either an antithesis or a similarity—(d) To conform to some ancient or recent rule—Conclusions on Analogy.

IN the philological treatises of the last fifteen or twenty years Analogy occupies a considerable space, and that not without reason, since man is by nature imitative: if he has to invent an expression, he does it more quickly by modelling it on some existing type, than by limiting himself to original creation. But it is a mistake to represent Analogy as a cause. Analogy is nothing more than a means. We shall try to demonstrate the true causes.¹

Languages have recourse to Analogy:—

(a) *To avoid some difficulty of expression.*—A more convenient formation having been found, the ancient

¹ I suppose that it is unnecessary to repeat what I said at the beginning about the will, semi-conscious and but feeling its way, that presides over the evolution of Language.

formation is, in a manner, arrested in its power of extension, reduced to that which it actually possesses, and deprived of all opportunity of further enriching itself. But from the moment that it ceases to be enriched it becomes impoverished. Habit effects the abandonment, now on one point, now on another, of the ancient formation. It ends by keeping only a small remnant of faithful specimens, specimens themselves increasingly incomplete and uncertain.

A striking example is furnished for us by Greek, with its two conjugations in μ i and in ω , which we find since the earliest ages in concurrence, the one (in μ i) constantly retiring, the other (in ω) as constantly progressing.

The conjugation in μ i is without doubt the more ancient,¹ as it is the more complicated and the more difficult of the two. It is therefore also a closed formation, reduced to some hundred verbs (of great importance, indeed), the number of which cannot increase. As early as in the Homeric age, the conjugation in μ i is not only blockaded, but also attacked in its own quarters. By the side of $\delta\epsilon\iota\kappa\nu\mu\iota$, a verb $\delta\epsilon\iota\kappa\nu\acute{\omega}$ is seen to arise. The verb $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\iota$, "to be," makes in the participle $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$, after the model of $\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\omega\nu$. The verb $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\iota$, "to go," makes in the optative $\acute{\iota}\omicron\iota\mu\iota$, after the model of $\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\omicron\iota\mu\iota$. Reduplicated verbs, like $\pi\acute{\iota}\pi\tau\omega$, $\mu\acute{\iota}\mu\omega$, $\gamma\acute{\iota}\gamma\omega\mu\alpha\iota$, which were of the same kind as $\tau\acute{\iota}\theta\eta\mu\iota$, $\delta\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\mu\iota$, $\kappa\acute{\iota}\chi\eta\rho\eta\mu\iota$, have decisively

¹ Some philologists in these last few years, have maintained that the conjugation in μ i was the more modern. We can see in this thesis but an ingenious paradox, the birth of which a mere glance at Latin should have obviated.

abandoned the conjugation in $\mu\epsilon$, in order to pass over to verbs in ω .

The conjugation in μ presents therefore the spectacle of a formation that has been stormed and sacked. Each of the losses that it has undergone has been a gain for the conjugation in ω . The memory does not willingly burden itself with two mechanisms working concurrently towards one and the same end: let it but hesitate, however slightly, and the forms most commonly in use will be the first to present themselves.

The conjugation in ω offered the advantage of a more uniform accentuation, of a lesser variety of vowels, of a more visible symmetry; the o or ϵ that insinuates itself between the root and the inflection ($\lambda\upsilon\text{-}o\text{-}\mu\epsilon\nu$, $\lambda\upsilon\text{-}\epsilon\text{-}\tau\epsilon$) is as a buffer that prevents conflicts. This greater facility was bound to ensure victory to the conjugation in ω .

In Latin, matters are yet further advanced. The struggle is already at an end. Who would imagine, without the light shed by cognate languages, that *sistere*, *bibere*, *gignere*, *serere*, were once reduplicated verbs, similar to $\tau\acute{\iota}\theta\eta\mu\iota$, $\delta\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\mu\iota$? The survivors of the ancient conjugation, *esse*, *ferre*, *velle*, and a few others, are classed among the irregular verbs. Yet they are only irregular in some of their forms. The work of adjustment being carried on by the people, *velle* has become in low Latin *volère*, whence the French *vouloir*; *posse* has become *potère*, whence the French *pouvoir*. The last remnants have therefore been little by little absorbed.

Nevertheless, such is the slowness of these evolutions

that even at the present day there remains in every Romance language a witness, unique indeed, to the conjugation in *μ*. This is the verb *être*, "to be," which by its anomalies betrays its earlier origin. It has moreover been vigorously cut about. In Spanish they have *somos*, *sois*, *son*, as if the Latin were *sumus*, *sutis*, *sunt*. Italian derives a gerundive *essendo* from an already modernised infinitive *essere*.

What has happened to the verbs has taken place also with the substantives. A declension that is easier and clearer gains ground from the other declensions. Already in the inscriptions of Delphi we find *τεθνακότοις*, *ἀγώνοις*, *ἐν ἀνδροῖς τριλοῖς*, *ἐν τοῖς ὀκτὼ ἐτέοις*, etc. This is a beginning that foreshadows what will happen in course of time to this third declension, which is too delicately adjusted. A nominative *ἀγωνον* presently arises in imitation of the dative *ἀγώνοις*. It is in this way that modern forms like *ἄρχοντοι*, *γέροντοι*, are fashioned. At quite an early stage, we find the nominatives *φύλακος*, *μάρτυρος*, *διάκτορος*, side by side with *φύλαξ*, *μάρτυς*, *διάκτωρ*.¹

Something of the same kind happened to the feminine gender. Nouns of the third declension have been changed into nouns of the first: instead of *φλόξ*, modern Greek says *ἡ φλόγα*, instead of *τὴν ἐλπίδα*, *τὴν ἐλπίδα*.

It is evident that the dative plural was the stone of stumbling: it is at this point that declensions invariably

¹ The facts are the same in India. See Otto Franke, *Die Sucht nach a-Stämmen im Pāli* (Annals of Bezenberger, xxii. p. 202).

begin to run off the rails. The present participle ἀκούων should have produced the scarcely convenient formation ἀκούουσι. But as early as in the Homeric language we find ἀκουόντεσσι.¹ These forms in εσσι, which had their birth among themes such as τεῖχος, become very frequent on inscriptions, where we find, for example, ἀρχόντεσσι, ἐόντεσσι, ἐλθόντεσσι, ἀγώνεσσι, πάντεσσι, εὐεργετησάντεσσι.

In comparing ἀγώνεσσι and ἀγώνοις, we are convinced that on both sides the aim is the same: to avoid ἀγῶσι.

In Latin, we find again the same facts, and in a still more visible manner. The declension of consonants is already half remodelled. It is to the type of the declension in *i* (*avis*, *collis*) that the different inflections have been brought back. This may be easily verified by comparing, for example, the Greek φερόντων, with the Latin *ferent-ium*, the Greek φέρωντα with the Latin *ferent-ia*, the Greek φέροντες with the Latin *ferent-ēs* (for *ferenteis*).² It must be remembered that the Latin pronunciation compresses words, abridges or extinguishes final syllables: all of which are causes that rendered the declension indistinct. The remodelling spread by degrees as far as certain nominatives: thus *juven*, "youth" (Sanskrit *juvan*), whence *juven-tus*, has become

¹ *Odyssey*, I., 352.

² There are still a few rare traces of the anterior state of things. Aulus Gellius (xix. 7) quotes from Lælius the expression *silentia loca*. *Silentia* is a plural neuter after the manner of φιλοῦντα. But Latin has lost the habit of these neuters: it says *veloc-ia*, *locuplet-ia*, *simplic-ia*. In the genitive plural there is still *parentum*, *animantium*: but the ordinary form is *-ium* (*adulescentium*, *infantium*, *discordium*).

juvenis; *aus*, "ear," whence *au(s)dire*, *auscultare*, "to listen," has become *ausis*, *auris*.

(δ) *To secure greater clearness.*—So far as it can be avoided, grammatical forms must not give rise to ambiguity. If they are too short, too blunt, they threaten to become unintelligible. That is what has happened for instance to the genitive plurals of the second declension. The ancient genitive in *um* (Greek *ων*), of which examples still exist in stereotyped expressions,¹ gives way to a genitive in *orum* borrowed from the pronouns, and having in addition the advantage of being symmetrical with the forms in *arum* of the first declension.

The superlative originally ended in *τος*. Of this very simple formation there have remained *τρίτος*, *τέταρτος*, *δέκατος*. We know indeed that the ordinal numbers are formed by the help of the same suffixes which serve to mark the degrees of comparison. But this exponent *τος*, too simple and too short, might have given rise to misunderstandings. By detaching the *a* from *δέκα*, Greek obtains a more complete suffix, *ατος*; whence such superlatives as *ὑπατος*, *ἑσχατος*, *πύματος*. For the sake of clearness, the language added the *τ* of the comparative *τερος* to the suffix *ατος*; thenceforward there was the suffix *τατος*, which permitted the opposition of *φίλτατος* to *φίλτερος*.²

The desire for explicit forms, explains how, in French,

¹ *Praefectus fabrum*, *duo milia sestertium*, *templa deum*, etc.

² We owe this model of historical study to M. Ascoli in the *Studien* of Curtius, ix. 342.

troisième, quatrième . . . have been substituted for the ancient ordinal numbers *tiers, quart, quint* (*le tiers parti, un quart voleur survient* . . .). Of the ancient Latin ordinals, only the first two are left: but already *deuxième*, instead of *second*, is familiar to French ears.

In the conjugation of verbs, certain past participles threaten to become estranged from the verb from which they are derived. Who realises now-a-days the relationship of the French *poids*, which should be written *pois*, with *pendre*, of *toise* with *tendre*, of *route* with *rompre*?¹ It was useful to have a form which emphasised the affinities to a greater degree. This explains the favour with which the participle in *utus* was received; *pendu, tendu, rompu*.² The movement started with a few rare fore-runners which we find in low Latin: *pendutus, decernutum, incendutum*. They are themselves a result of imitation (Latin *solutus, statutus*).³ Thanks to this final syllable, French has re-established the disordered lines of its conjugation.

Instead of *nous prenmes, nous faismes*, which should have been the outcome of the Latin *prendimus, facimus, nous pren-ons, nous fais-ons*, were formed: instead of

¹ As late as in the sixteenth century, fractions, in mathematics, were called *nombres roughts*. *Route* designates a way made by breaking through (*rompre*) forest and field.

² Children when they say *j'ai perdu*, are conforming themselves to the models furnished by language. They have long been recognised as active auxiliaries of grammatical regularity. Instead of *I came, I caught*, they are often heard to say, *I comed, I caught*.

³ Latin verbs having their perfect in *ui*, like *habui, tenui*, were the first to take a participle in *utus*.

vous prents which should have resulted from the Latin *prenditis*, we find *vous pren-ez*. Whence come these fuller inflections? The second person of the plural sufficiently indicates this. They have been borrowed from the first conjugation.¹

Let us give another example drawn from the Greek conjugation.

In the third person of the plural, the second aorists of verbs like *τίθημι* have a very short inflection: *ἔθεν*, *ἔβαν*, *ἔσαν*, *ἔφυν*, etc. Homeric language abounds in forms of this kind. But its drawbacks are obvious: these third persons of the plural too closely resembled the first persons of the singular. The means employed were very simple: thanks to an addition borrowed from the first aorist, there were formed *ἔβησαν*, *ἵστασαν*, *ἔφασαν*, *ἔφυσαν*, *ἀνέθεσαν*.²

It is a fact, surprising at first sight, but attested by numerous proofs, that the suffixes most frequently in use in our modern languages are borrowed. Thus Greek has helped us to form words in *-ism*, such as *optimism*, *socialism*; in *-ist*, such as *artist*, *florist*; in *-ise*, such as *authorise*, *fertilise*. German has furnished the suffix *-ard*, as in the French *vantard*, *bavard*, the English *dastard*, *coward*, *bastard*. Italian the suffix *-esque*, as in *gigantesque*, *romanesque*, *picturesque*. Strictly speaking, even French words in *-al*, such as *national*, *provincial*, in *-ateur*, like *ordonnateur*, *provocateur*, are formed by the

¹ The only survivors which have not been remodelled are: *vous dites (dicitis)*, *vous faites (facitis)*.

² Curtius, *Das Verbum*, i. 74.

help of Latin suffixes, since these same suffixes, when they have made their entry into French by way of popular usage, have worn a different aspect. It is the want of explicit forms, which shall stand out clearly before the eyes, that has procured this special favour for foreign inflections: the native inflections, having been subjected to the wear and tear of ages, and having mingled with the anterior part of the word, are not so obvious.

The same practice is observable everywhere. It is well known what a success has been obtained in German by the French inflection *-ie*, which has given the substantives in *-ei*, like *Bäckerei*, *Zauberei*. English again has borrowed from the second conjugation of French that syllable *-ish* that is often found not only in *finish*, *nourish*, where the model is furnished by French, but also in *publish*, *distinguish*, where the suffix is transferred by imitation.

In every age and in every nation there have been purists who protested against these borrowings. But those who really form the language, anxious above all to be understood, and that at least cost, trouble themselves but little about the origin of the materials with which they work.

(c) *To emphasise either an antithesis or a similitude.*—Language here reveals to us a fact of psychology; the mind, which naturally associates ideas in couples, likes to solder together contraries by giving them the same exterior. While this helps the memory, it gives greater relief to speech. "Nothing is more natural," says Bain, "when we consider a quality, than the disposi-

tion to return to the other quality, which forms its contrast."

We will begin by the simplest examples.

Day and night form an antithesis as old as the hills : on the model of *diu*, Latin, diverting the ablative *nocte* from its declension, has made *noctu*. On the model of *diurnus* it has made *nocturnus*.¹

Another antithesis no less ancient is that of life and death. On the model of *vivus*, Latin has made *mortuus*. According to the rules of the Latin language, *morior* should make *mortus*, as *orior*, *experior*, make *ortus*, *expertus*.² But as occasion for antithesis arises perpetually,³ the final syllable of the one has communicated itself to the other.

The expressions "before" and "after" are likewise of a nature to influence one another. By the side of the adverb *antid*, that became later on *ante*, Latin formed an adverb *postid*, that became later on *poste* or *post*. *Postid* was preserved in *postid-ea*, which is modelled on *antid-ea*. At its base is the syllable *pos*, "after."⁴

We see from this that, in order to determine a creation by Analogy, there is no necessity for a language to furnish a large number of models. In the cases that we

¹ It has lately been maintained that it is *noctu* that has influenced *diu* : but to establish the true filiation, it is sufficient to recall the Sanscrit *divas* or *djus*, "day", (*pūrvē-djus*, "yesterday").

² The form *mortus* is, in fact, that to which the verb has reverted in the Romance languages.

³ *Mortuum aut vivum*.—*Vivo et mortuo*. C. I. L., vi. 6467 ; ix. 4816, etc.

⁴ Sanscrit *pas*, "after," in *paç-cāt*.

have just mentioned, a single word has sufficed; but that is because the two terms were in direct opposition. It might be said that Analogy makes its power felt in a direct ratio to the situation. Thus in French we find the adjective *méridional*, for whose suffix, unknown elsewhere, it would be impossible to account, were it not for the antithesis *septentrional*.

Such a form is inexplicable, until compared with its opposite. So also ἐμπόδων (in speaking of a difficulty, an obstacle) is only explained by ἐκπόδων, "out of the way of one's feet."¹

The Greeks, who already knew Analogy by antithesis, called it by a pretty name: συνεκδρομή κατ' ἐναντιότητα. The image is taken from a beast that breaks loose from its own herd and follows another.

We will now give some examples of Analogy serving to emphasise a resemblance.

As names of relationship like πατήρ, μήτηρ, θυγάτηρ, had their dative plural in -ασι, the Greek υἱός, "son," for no other reason, made υἱάσι. M. J. Wackernagel points out a similar case in Sanscrit.² The word *pāti*, which means at the same time "master" and "husband," has two genitives, the one (regular) *pātēs*, when it signifies "master," the other (irregular) *pātjus*, when it signifies "husband." This *pātjus* comes from genitives like *pītus*, "of the father"; *mātus*, "of the mother."

¹ Analogy by opposition appears equally in the antithesis ἡμεῖς and ὑμεῖς, μακρός and μικρός. See also (*Mem. Soc. Ling.*, ix.) what I said of the adverb σιωπή.

² *Journal de Kuhn*, xxv. 289.

Greek possessed a substantive *οὔθαρ* (genitive *οὔθαρος*), "breast," the antiquity of which is attested by the Latin *uber*, and the German *Euter*, as well as by the Sanscrit *ūdhar*. These nouns in *-ar*, *-aros* have been multiplied to mark some portion of the body. We find *γόνατε*, "the two knees"; *ὠατε*, "the two ears"; *προσώπατε*, "the two eyes," and even *κ'ρηαρ*, "the head."

Briefly, we may find in every language some words which from being similar in meaning have approximated in form. Greek, for example, has *λάβρυξ*, and *φάρυγξ*, *σῦριγξ* and *σάλπιγξ*. Sanscrit has *angūṣṭha*, "the thumb"; *ōṣṭha*, "the lip"; *kōṣṭha*, "the belly"; *upastha*, "the lap." Celtic languages have their words in *arn* and in *orn*; vague relics of classification, more than half effaced, comparable only to those alignments, which, on the sites of vanished cities, still bear witness that in former days men tried to build their dwellings with some show of order.¹

It is in Syntax especially that this kind of symmetry is observed. Many constructions repugnant to pure logic find herein their explanation. If verbs signifying "to take, to deprive, to snatch away," are in Latin constructed with the dative, it is because "to give, to assign, to offer," have that construction. If *diffidere alicui* was said, that was because *credere alicui* was said. If *obliviscitur nostri* with the genitive was said, that was because *meminit nostri* was said, also with the

¹ See Bloomfield, *On Adaptation of Suffixes in Congeneric Classes of Substantives*, Baltimore, 1891.—Zimmer, *American Journal of Philology*, 1895, p. 419.

genitive.¹ Finally, if *in urbe* was said with the ablative, which would seem to imply a contradiction, since the ablative denotes an idea of removal, that was because *ex urbe*, *ab urbe*, were said. Thus also in German *in dem Haus*, *zu dem Haus*, in which *in* and *zu* are used with the dative, have led to the employment of the dative in such expressions as *aus dem Haus*, *von dem Haus*. So in English because we say *agree with some one*, we say too *differ with some one*.

We have only to listen to the conversation of people who are but imperfectly acquainted with a language, and to take note of the mistakes which they make, to see that it is by associations of this kind that they are usually influenced.

(d) *Analogy in order to conform to some ancient or recent rule.*—These words need an explanation. We are now speaking of a rule not yet formulated; a rule at which mankind strives to guess, and which we see children trying to discover. By pre-supposing its existence, the people actually creates it. The idea that Language is obedient to fixed laws is profoundly impressed on the popular mind; indeed nothing can be more reasonable, since, without laws, Language would cease to be intelligible, and would fail in its primary and only object. We see that with the ordinary man an infringement of what he supposes to be the rule provokes either laughter or contempt.

¹ *Obliviscor* means literally "to yellow, to be effaced." The metaphor is drawn from a writing that fades. Varro (*De L., L.* v. 10) calls words that have dropped out of usage: *oblivia verba*.

Forms which bewilder by an unusual aspect, are therefore regarded as faulty, and brought back to the so-called regular type. It is in this way that exceptions become less and less numerous and finally disappear. Philologists, conservative by profession, are usually unfavourable to this kind of adjustment. Here, however, Analogy fulfils a necessary function, without which there would soon be nothing but obscurity and disorder.

But the people must not be set problems too difficult for solution: if there are pitfalls in the path it will fall into them. Isidore de Séville records a verb of the first conjugation, in use in his day, *prostrare*, "to throw to the ground"; it is *prostravi* that has produced this verb, the road that led to *prosterno* having become too difficult to find. Even in classical Latin we find *delere*, "to efface, to delete," drawn from the perfect *delevi*, which is a compound of *linere*. There was a verb *præstare*, compound of *stare*, which formed in the perfect *præstiti*, "I have excelled"; another verb *præstare*, derived from *præstus* (*præ-situs*), "prepared, ready," has therefore also formed *præstiti*, "I have prepared, I have furnished."

The memory of the people is short. We find a plural like *omnes* (for *homines*) enriching itself with a neuter *omnia*, and a singular *omnis*: we see a feminine *felix* (from *fela*, "breast") producing a masculine and a neuter.¹

It is interesting to note how scrupulously the rule, once admitted, is obeyed and applied. The philologist who watches this process and who, knowing the elements

¹ *Felicia arma. Felix omen.*

that have been set in motion, sees the most incongruous materials going through the mill, cannot help admiring the performance. This has been erroneously called a compulsion (*Systemzwang*). There is no compulsion: there is only voluntary obedience to the rule.

Here are a few specimens.

We are accustomed to find Greek verbs taking the syllabic or temporal augment in the imperfect and in the aorist. But we are not prepared to find the augment modifying an adverb or a pronoun. This, however, is what happens when, in Xenophon, compound words like *ὀπισθοφύλαξ*, "rear-guard," *αὐτόμολος*, "deserter," give birth to imperfects like *ὀπισθοφυλάκει* and to aorists like *αὐτομόλησε*. No one is surprised excepting the philologist, who sees in it an example of popular logic. In modern Greek, where the augment survives, it is placed unhesitatingly before prepositions; it is usual to say, for example, *ἐπροτίμων*, "I liked better"; *ἠνόχλησα*, "I have disturbed." Ancient Greek had already made a beginning by saying *ἐκάθενδε*.

There is nothing very surprising in the fact that Latin took a passive or middle participle like *amamini*, *laudamini*, and made out of it a second person of the conjugation, with *estis* implied: it is as if we found in Greek *φιλούμενοι ἔστε*, *τιμώμενοι ἔστε*. But the point at which Analogy begins its work is when we find *amabimini*, *amemini*, *amaremini*, forms which are heteroclite, but perfectly intelligible.

Analogy is specially interesting to observe when it grapples with an unforeseen difficulty.

The reduplication of the initial syllable of verbs, obligatory in the perfect, became almost impossible in the case of the groups $\sigma\pi$, $\sigma\tau$, $\sigma\kappa$, or of the letters ζ , ξ . We know how Greek gets round the difficulty. In such a case, instead of reduplication, it is satisfied with the augment. We seem to witness some such compromise as appears in the history of institutions and of laws. Or, if this comparison gives too much prominence to self-conscious reason, let us say that we are watching the labour of some ingenious animal, which builds itself a house with materials unequally fitted for the purpose.

It is especially important to notice the aim which is thus darkly pursued. It is impossible for any one who studies the Greek verb not to recognise an intention of completing the design: by the side of the aorist indicative $\lambdaύσα$ there are found an aorist imperative $\lambdaύσάτω$, an aorist optative $\lambdaύσαιμι$, an aorist participle $\λύσας$. The α that reappears in these various forms is, as it were, its signature. The intelligence of the masses is here seen on one of its most interesting sides: by the simplest means, it wins through the difficulties which, in every profession and every art, the material opposes to the workman.

The foregoing observations will show in what light Analogy should be regarded. If we considered the use made of it in certain books of recent date, we should take it for some great sponge, passing vaguely over grammar, mixing and confusing the common forms, for the aimless effacement of legitimate and useful dis-

tinctions. But such is not its character: it is on the contrary in the service of reason, a reason indeed somewhat short of memory, but none the less a true and necessary motive power of Language.

The question has been often discussed whether "in the childhood of our languages" Analogy had as much power as it has to-day. "Can we," says Curtius, "admit analogical formations at such a remote epoch? Analogical formations seem to me probable in recent periods only. . . . It was certainly not by chance that attention was first drawn to these facts with reference to modern languages, more especially the Romance languages."

We cannot on this point agree with the learned Hellenist. If attention was first drawn in this direction with reference to the Romance languages, the reason is that the Romance languages leave their origins exposed to view, an advantage which is wanting to the ancient epochs. But the causes which bring about the changes being causes inherent in the mind and imposed by the conditions of all Language, there is no reason to believe that they acted less powerfully in the past.

Is it true, as has also been said, that Analogy is a blind force, persisting to the very end, allowing nothing to arrest its progress?

It is difficult to believe that this is the case when, abandoning theory, we face the facts. Experience proves on the contrary that Analogy has its limits, which indeed form a study at least as interesting as the actual

phenomenon. Motives of clearness or of harmony suffice to hold it in check.

One last question must be put : does Analogy deserve the disfavour to which certain philologists have condemned it?

- If unduly pressed, Analogy would make languages too uniform and, in consequence, monotonous and poor. The philologist, the writer, will always, by taste as by profession, be on the side of the vanquished, that is to say of the forms which Analogy threatens to absorb. But it is thanks to Analogy that the child, without learning one after the other all the words of a language, without having to test them one by one, yet attains to mastery over them in a comparatively short time. It is thanks to Analogy that we are sure of being heard, sure of being understood, even if we chance to create a new word. Analogy must therefore be regarded as a primordial condition of all Language. Whether it has been a source of fecundity and of clearness, or whether it has been the cause of sterile uniformity, this the individual history of each language alone can teach us.

CHAPTER VII

NEW ACQUISITIONS

Need of indicating acquisitions together with losses—The infinitive
—The passive—Adverbial suffixes—Historical conclusions.

IT is easier to distinguish the gaps which occur in a society than to notice the new forces which are making themselves manifest. In the same way we more often hear of the losses undergone by Language than of the reinforcements which come to its aid. Grammatical evolution is brought about so slowly, and by so obscure a process, that, for the most part, it escapes the notice of the observer. Yet it is hardly credible that during a period of four thousand years, the Indo-European languages should have suffered a constant waste, without compensation of any kind. The history of the losses has been often written: that of the acquisitions still remains to write. We propose, by way of indication, to enumerate a few examples.

There can be no question, be it well understood, of creations *ex nihilo*. The form which progress assumes

is the appropriation to new usages of material transmitted by the past.

Let us first take the infinitive.

This exceedingly valuable form, the first to be learnt by children, the first to pass between two peoples when they come into contact and try to understand each other, has nevertheless not always existed. It is, on the contrary, the product of a slow selection : it is the fruit of a tardily accomplished union between the substantive and the verb. The relatively recent date of the infinitive can at once be ascertained, by noting how Latin and Greek, in agreement concerning the rest of the conjugation, here part company with each other. There is no resemblance between the inflection of λέγειν and that of *legere*, between εἶναι and *esse*. And even, without going outside the Greek language, by comparing dialectal formations like ἔμμεν, εἶναι, ἔμεναι, it can be ascertained without a doubt that until a fairly recent epoch, Greek had not made its definite choice. Latin seems at first sight more decided ; but a little attention shows plainly that it is even farther from realising the unity of the infinitive, since it divides the function between three forms : the infinitive properly so-called, the supine, and the gerundive. It is only in modern languages that this unity becomes an accomplished fact.

The infinitive represents the verbal idea, disburdened of all accessory and adventitious elements. It knows neither person nor number. The idea of the voice (active, middle, passive) is in the main foreign to it.¹

¹ *A wine pleasant to drink, a counsel difficult to follow, an insult*

Even the idea of tense only entered in by a sort of redundancy and thanks to belated after-touches. Certain grammarians would turn the infinitive into a *mood* of the verb; but it is not a mood. It is, as the ancients justly said, the most general form of the verb (τὸ γενικώτατον ῥῆμα), the name of the action (ὄνομα πράγματος).¹

To realise the importance of this form, it is sufficient to read a few lines of some modern language. Half verb and half substantive, the infinitive, though it does not carry the cumbersome baggage with which both these species of words are laden, yet renders identical services. Like the verb, it has a transitive power; it is able, like the verb, to take to itself a subject; like the verb, it can be accompanied by an adverb or a negation. But, on the other hand, employed as a substantive, it can be either subject or object; it is placed after prepositions like *to*, *of*, *for*, *without*, and always without the trouble of inflections. It is able to express an exclamation, a desire, or an order. Finally, it is less exposed to that Concretion of meaning, to that crystallisation, that coagulation, of which we shall have to speak later on, and with which all substantives, even abstract substantives, are threatened.²

impossible to forgive. In Greek, καλὸς ὄραν, ἕξις θαυμάσαι, ῥῆδιον μαθεῖν. In Latin, *Mirabile visu, difficile dictu*, etc. Cicero (*Ad. Fam.*, ix. 25) gives us in passing this example of a change that has come over the meaning: *Nunc ades ad imperandum, vel ad parendum potius: sic enim antiqui loquebantur.*

¹ *Infinitorum vis in nomen rei resolvitur.* (Priscian.)

² Compare, for example, *frui* and *fructus*, *regere* and *regio*, etc. See farther on, the chapter on abstract words.

In face of such advantages, one wonders what could have retarded to such an extent the creation of the infinitive. To answer this question, we must for a moment glance backwards and consider the general plan of our languages.

- Every time that there is question of classifying languages according to their greater or less perfection, we are accustomed to speak of the Indo-European family as situated on the topmost rung of the ladder. Yet no long search is required to find in this family what we regard as a characteristic of but slightly advanced idioms. Certain languages of America can say "my head, your head, his head," but not "head" in general. This indeed is barbarous. But it was in no way different with the Indo-European verb, which could say *φέρω, φέρεις, φέρει*, but not *φέρειν*. In the primitive plan, action had always reference to a person. A form like *δίδωμι, δίδοθι*, represents in itself alone a whole proposition; it contains at the same time both the verb and its subject. Our languages are not therefore so far removed from the state known as holophrastic, in which the word in itself was a phrase.

The infinitive is a conquest of abstraction. It had to be sought for outside the verb, among the substantives. The elaboration of the infinitive had already been begun, but not completed, at the pro-ethnic epoch. Centuries were needed for each idiom to fix its choice on a certain form of substantive, and to be put in possession, to the exclusion of others, of some of the essential properties of the verb.

It is here that you appreciate the advantages of what is called the lack of transpiciuity or phonetic corruption. This so-called decadence has contributed not a little towards developing the full utility of the infinitive. It is difficult to know with certainty to which case of the declension such Greek forms as *ζευγνύμεναι*, *ιδεῖν*, *φέρεσθαι* • belonged. But this indecision only rendered them easier to handle. It is the same with the Latin infinitive. If the forms modelled on *videre*, *audire* ended by ousting the forms modelled on *visum*, *auditum*, it was perhaps because in them the mark of the declension is to a greater degree obliterated.

This reminds me of a fact that well demonstrates the importance which the infinitive has assumed in our languages. When, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, German enriched itself with a quantity of French verbs, it adopted them under the guise of the infinitive, superadding, oddly enough, German inflections. It is owing to this that we find in Wolfram von Eschenbach *fischieren*, "to fasten"; *leischieren*, "to leave"; *loschieren*, "to lodge"; *partieren*, "to speak"; and many others. The result is that at the present day when the German says *ich spaziere*, he adds to the infinitive *espacieren* the inflection of the first person. Nothing more clearly proves how, in our modern languages, the idea of the verb has incarnated itself in the infinitive.¹

¹ This explanation of the German verbs in *-ieren* has been disputed by Mr. Leo Wiener (*American Journal of Philology*, 1895, p. 330). This man of science thinks that the origin must be sought for in nouns in *-ier*, *-ierre*, like *floitierre*, "flutist," whence *floitieren*, "to play the flute." But the facts seem scarcely in agreement with

It will be asked how Greek, having once possessed the infinitive, could have let it fall into disuse during the Middle Ages. This loss is indeed one of the most surprising facts of Indo-European philology; for to say, as has been said recently, that the Greek infinitive was lost through being too freely used, is to give an explanation beyond the grasp of ordinary intelligence. But it must be remarked that the blank caused by the absence of the infinitive became especially painful when modern Greek, finding itself in the company of the other languages of modern Europe, felt the need of equalising the resources of its syntax. It may be supposed that neither the liturgies of the Church, nor the folk-songs, with their brief and simple language, had been conscious of any want. The idiom *θα* (*θέλει ἵνα*) with the subjunctive was used instead. An intellectual tool is lost by non-usage: a form too rarely employed is effaced from the memory.¹

By a strange reversal of things, it was formerly believed that verbs started with the infinitive. "Men," says a writer of the beginning of this century, "express themselves at first only in a general manner; and it is but later that they attain to analysing, to particularising each idea. In proportion as languages

this explanation. The substantives which have to be presupposed are usually wanting. Moreover, we clearly see two inflections overlaid in verbs like *condesciieren*, in French *conduire*, "to conduct"; we are therefore justified in admitting an analogous superposition for the others.

¹ We find as early as in the apocryphal Gospels: *θέλω ἵνα ἐπιβουλεύσωμεν*, — *Πρέπει ἵνα ἀποστείλωμεν*.

arrive at their maturity, the infinitive forms disappear, but in a just proportion: they are still of use in giving variety to the style, although it may be already perceptible that they are becoming less frequent." It would be impossible to shut the eyes more resolutely to the truth. The infinitive sums up centuries of effort: it is the most recent of verbal forms.

Like the infinitive, the passive is of the number of those methods of expression which one is tempted to imagine much more ancient than they are.

Sylvestre de Sacy, who wrote for the use of his children the *Principes de Grammaire Générale*, represents the passive as one of the two necessary forms of the verb. He gives for this three reasons. The passive is necessary: first, when you wish to express an action without naming the acting subject: "I am afflicted"; secondly, when you wish to bring out the object which suffers the action rather than the subject which performs it: "The Roman empire was founded by Augustus"; thirdly, to vary the discourse and prevent monotony.

A philologist of a different school, but too prone to theories, Hartung,¹ explains the active and passive by reducing them to directions in space. The active answers to the question *quo* (whence the accusative); the passive responds to the question *unde* (whence the ablative or genitive).

It is unnecessary to point out the artificiality of these explanations. The passive is not an ancient form: this may be guessed by merely noting how widely *φέρομαι*

¹ *Encyclopedia* of Ersch and Gruber, iii. vol. xiii. p. 172.

and *feror* differ as to inflections. The passive is a form acquired gradually by the diverse Indo-European languages long after the system of their conjugation was completed in its principal lines. It was by taking possession of the reflexive form that the greater part of them, and especially Latin and Greek, contrived to create a passive voice.

To understand how the reflexive form can take the place of the passive, it will be enough for me to quote a few French sentences, in which, even at the present day, the same turn of phrase is used :

"Les grands poids se transportent mieux par la voie maritime."

"Cette forme de vêtement ne se porte plus."

"Ces événements se sont vite oubliés."

"Le monde de la nature se divise en trois règnes."

And in Italian : *dicesi, temesi*. And even : *avvenimenti compiutisi*.

Not that the idea of the passive was difficult to conceive : "I am stricken" is no less easy to understand than "I strike." The difficulty arose elsewhere : it arose in the general plan of our languages, which is opposed to the passive idea ; for the Indo-European languages have always presented the phrase in the form of a little drama wherein the subject is always active. Faithful to this plan, they still say : "The wind shakes the trees." "The smoke rises into the sky." "A polished surface reflects the light." "Anger blinds the mind." "Time passes quickly." "Two and two make four." Each of these propositions contains the enuncia-

tion of an act attributed to the subject of the phrase. Even the passive itself had to be imagined under the form of an act.

It is this indeed that our languages have realised. They created the passive more or less tardily by presenting it in the form of an act returning upon the subject. *Pascitur* meant "he nourishes himself," before it meant "he is nourished." *Διδάσκομαι* meant "I teach myself," before it meant "I am taught." On this point the Germanic and Slav languages are particularly instructive. We find in them the successive stages of the metamorphosis. In old Norsk *their finna sik* means: "they find each other." Thence arose a form *their finmask*, meaning "they are," "they exist," and finally, "they are found" (that is to say, *inveniuntur*). The same thing appears in Lithuanian and in Slav. It was indeed the Letto-Slav family which, by the transplicity of its forms, first pointed the way to the origin of the passive.

We have here a fresh example of the intention that presides over the evolutions of Language, simultaneously with an example of the almost childish simplicity by which that intention attains its ends. The passive seemed directly opposed to the idea expressed by our verbs: nevertheless, the passive has, by an identical method, found its expression in idioms far removed from each other.

I will give yet another example of this intelligence, hidden and yet so alert, which takes advantage of the smallest accidents to furnish thought with new resources.

Everybody knows that the adverb is an ancient adjective or substantive which has abandoned the regular plan of declension. It is in this way that *primum*, *ceterum*, *potius* are ancient accusatives, that *crebro*, *subito*, *vulgo* are ancient ablatives. But whence come the adverbs in *-e*, like *pulchre*, *recte*? This has not up till now been sufficiently investigated.

Latin was wont to change its substantives or adjectives from one declension to another, when they were lengthened by a prefix, or entered into a compound. *Animus* made *exanimis*, *fama* made *infamis*, *clivus* made *proclivis*, *poena* made *impunis*, and so on. The ablative of these words in *-is* was *eid* or *e*. At an epoch when the Latin language was not yet fixed there was therefore a choice between *infirmus* or *infirmis*, *præclarus* or *præclaris*, the ablatives of which were *infirmo* or *infirmis*, *præclaro* or *præclare*. Usage has not failed to profit by this double formation: it has given the preference to the form in *e*, which stood out better from the ordinary declension. Not only was this form preferred for the adverb, but it was also generalised, so that it produced words like *firme*, *clare*. The Oscan *amprufid*, which corresponds to the Latin *improbe*, is a witness which permits of no doubts as to this origin. The Latin language thus entered into possession of an adverbial inflection, of which it has, as is well known, made the widest use.¹

An observation of a rather different nature here presents itself. We have just quoted two or three

¹ See *Mem. Soc. Ling.*, vii. 188.

examples of acquisitions made by our languages.¹ They are certainly both valuable and important. Yet however useful they may be, they do not either in value or in number, approach the acquisitions previously capitalised. By these I mean that grammatical machinery which constitutes the common stock of the Indo-European languages, and which was already of ancient date and completely fixed when Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, Germanic, Slav, Celtic appeared for the first time. Therein, if I mistake not, lies a means of weighing the antiquity of the Indo-European languages.

By the antiquity of the Indo-European languages, I do not mean the antiquity of a race, a thing difficult both to conceive and to understand, but the antiquity of a civilisation. For a grammar and a morphological system to attain to the degree of unity and of fixity that we find at the base of Aryan languages, a certain perpetuity in tradition is necessary. This perpetuity presupposes, if not a literature, at least formulas, folk-songs, sacred texts transmitted from age to age.

As there is no reason to suppose that in those early ages history pursued a swifter course, we are thus enabled to estimate the extent of the past. We have just seen how long a time was needed for each of our languages to acquire an infinitive, a passive, adverbial

¹ We might also cite, in the Slav languages, the creation of the "animated gender," which rests on the morphological distinction between substantives designating beings endowed with life and those which are without it. This distinction arose subsequently and owing to a mere accident of language. See the work of A. Meillet, in the *Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études*.

inflections. And further, a choice is not definitely determined till after long centuries. Moreover, the acquisition of new instruments, such as the article, the auxiliary verbs, has required no shorter time. We should therefore concede to the period that went before, in itself of far greater importance, at least an equivalent number of centuries. As the historical period that we are able to survey, from the first Vedic hymns until our own time, amounts to about three thousand years, it is not too much to ask another three thousand years for the period which went before it. No less was necessary to separate noun and verb, to establish the conjugation and the declension, to eliminate the useless parts, to create the mechanism of noun-formation, to devise a pronominal declension corresponding to the substantival, to allow Analogy to establish the beginning of its empire, finally to lay the foundations of Syntax.

If we admit for the past the same measure of time as is furnished by observation of modern epochs, six thousand years are the minimum which can be estimated as the period of civilisation represented by our family of languages.

CHAPTER VIII

EXTINCTION OF USELESS FORMS

Difficulty of this study—Superabundant forms produced by grammatical mechanism—Advantages of Extinction—Are there any forms irrevocably doomed to disappear?

THE Extinction of useless forms is not to be understood only of those which, after having existed for a longer or shorter period, have dropped out of usage; but also of those forms which, virtually possessing the right to live, have yet never attained realisation. It will be understood that we are now entering the domain of hypothesis. Nevertheless this kind of verbal infanticide has its place in the history of Language.

If you consider the matter from the standpoint of a mere statistician, over-production will seem inevitable. Suppose the Greek language carried out, through all tenses and all moods, the three verbs, *λείπω*, *λίπω*, and *λιμπάνω*, which all three signify "to leave," or the three verbs *βίβημι*, *βαίνω*, and *βάσκω*, which all three signify "to walk," there would be such an abundance of forms that the mind would be overwhelmed.¹ But everybody

¹ See above, p. 37.

knows that it is not so; the semi-conscious wisdom which presides over the elaboration of Language brings about the elimination of useless forms. What is of no use is suppressed. Hence the composite conjugations. Hence paradigms such as: *λείπω, ἔλιπον; βάλω, ἔβην; λαμβάνω, ἔλαθον.*

Although composite, these conjugations do not cease to be regular. As it is in the nature of the popular mind to proceed with regularity, it imports order also into its radiations. The second aorist has everywhere inherited the shortest forms, while the present has usually kept what remains of the forms which are most developed.

The play of the Greek conjugation is therefore due to a succession of affluence and poverty. Not that there remain no useless riches. Sanscrit has as many as seven different formations of the preterite. Certain Greek verbs have two aorists, two futures, two perfects. But in proportion as languages grow old, they rid themselves of their superfluity. This fluctuation, which gives to the Homeric language a choice between three or four forms, no longer exists in the Greek of Lucian.¹

The Extinction of useless forms goes the length of uniting different verbs in one and the same conjugation: *fero, tuli; ὁράω, εἶδον; λέγω, εἶπον, εἶρηκα; je vais, j'irai, je suis allé; I go, I went; I am, I was, I have been, etc., etc.* Our grammars represent these as defective verbs which have reciprocally completed each

¹ It has moreover been imagined, not without some semblance of truth, that the fluctuation of the Homeric tongue would have been less great but for the admixture of several different recensions.

other ; but for such an adjustment it was first necessary to cut away all the parts which formed a useless repetition.¹

The Suppression of certain words ensures clearer oppositions. The feminine of ἀνὴρ was ἀνείρα, which survives in composition : but as a simple word it has disappeared, giving place to γυνή. In the same way in German the opposition of *Mann* and *Frau* is due to Suppression of the masculine *Fro*.² In French there was a masculine *dame*,³ which is no longer used, but which long remained in *dame-Dieu*.

Sometimes Suppression comes about in another way. *Rex* could give an adjective *reginus*, similar to *divinus*. But this masculine having been smothered, there has remained the pair : *rex*, *regina*.⁴

When a language has at its disposal two correlative terms like πῶσος, τόσος, ποῖος, τοῖος, and like *quantus*, *tantus*, *qualis*, *talis*, the Suppression of the one must have the effect of changing the meaning of the survivor. That

¹ Sometimes the invention of a very simple process yields to the popular intelligence more forms than it can utilise. The employment of auxiliary verbs is a case in point. When the Latins began to say *impruntatum habeo*, "I have borrowed," they inaugurated a mechanism whose richness surpassed their imagination and whose products have not all been allotted a distinct appropriation.

² A masculine which still appears in *Fronhof*, "Seigniorial court," *Fronrecht*, "seigniorial right," *Fronleichnam*, "Body of Our Lord."

³ Whence *vidame* (*vice-dominus*).

⁴ These clearings, so to speak, effected (some fairly recently) in the vocabulary, are made yet more obvious by certain names of animals, like *bull* and *cow*, *stag* and *hind*, *cock* and *hen*, etc.

is what occurred in Latin with *tōtus*, which presupposed a correlative *quōtus*.¹ The Latins must first have said *tota terra, quōta est*. We see how, by means of Suppression, the Latin language acquired a word signifying "all." The same thing occurred in Greek. At first a pronoun *rās* must have answered to *πās*. Suppressions of these various kinds are not losses: on the contrary, Language gains thereby in rapidity and in force.

Languages may be judged by what they pass over in silence as well as by what they express. When we observe other families, we see that those who laid the foundations of the Indo-European grammar were relatively moderate. The declension seems never to have had more than a limited number of cases. The conjugation, though more exuberant, never attained to the developments which we find elsewhere. It does not mark the gender; it does not make the distinction between momentary and prolonged action; it has avoided idle honorary distinctions; it has not tried to include too many things in one single word.²

Our languages have, in general, abstained from marking many idle distinctions, which, being merely superficial, are but a frivolous expenditure of intellect. In

¹ Not to be confounded with *quōtus*, which is a derivative of the noun of number, *quōt*.

² It says, for example, in one single word: *ἵσταμαι*—"I place myself"; *ἵστασαι*, "thou placest thyself"; *ἵσταται*, "he places himself." But it has never tried to say in one word: "I place you," or "he places me."

Japanese, for example, words change according as the speaker takes count of quadrupeds or fish, days or dimensions. In Basque there is a ceremonial conjugation.¹ As there are profound differences in the art of different peoples, this delighting in details, that grasping at nature in her grander lines, so in Language also there may be obstruction and superfluity. The Extinction of useless forms, whether they perish because abandoned by a more mature reason, or whether they are arrested by the mind before their conception, has therefore its necessary part to play.

It is interesting when the same idea is represented by two synonymous terms, to see how Language gets rid of one of the two, though not so completely as to leave no traces. The name for an old man is *γέρων* in Greek, *senex* in Latin: the two terms co-existed alongside of one another in an anterior period, and we find in Sanscrit, by the side of *garan*, which corresponds exactly to *γέρων*, the word *sanas*, "old," which is of the family of *senex*. Greek made its choice, Latin did the same: but they chose differently. Greek, however, still says *ἐναι ἀρχαί* (in opposition to *νέαι*) to designate magistrates giving up office; it also says *ἐναι καρποί* to designate the fruits of the past year. The language of politics and agriculture therefore retained in an exceptional manner the synonym that had otherwise dropped out of use. Latin, on the other hand, designated a man worn with

¹ Sayce, *Introduction to the Science of Language*, i. 205, third edition.

years, by *æ-ger* (for *ævi-ger*), a compound the second part of which is the root of γέρων.¹ Composition has here saved the synonym which everywhere else has been sacrificed. This demonstrates all the more clearly the adjustment which took place in both languages.

Latin having expressed the idea of hearing by the periphrastic expression *audire*, which means strictly "to receive in one's ear,"² the ancient verb *cluo* became thenceforward useless, and was bound to disappear. But it is the substantive *cliens* (cf. the German *der Gehörige*) which proves that it did, in a more distant age, exist in Latin.

Are there any Extinctions of words or of forms which are imposed by Phonetics? This has been frequently maintained. Yet, when we see with how little difficulty the popular instinct saves what it does not wish to lose, we begin to doubt this so-called necessity. If there was one word more than another threatened with Extinction during the transition from Latin into French it was the word *avis* (*oiseau*). Yet we see how easily it was preserved and multiplied under the forms *oiseau* (*avicellus*), *oie* (*avica*, *auca*), *oison* (*aucio*). If a verb is in question, the frequentative comes to take the place of the simple form: *premere*, *pellere* would have had trouble

¹ In Sanscrit, *gar*, "to be worn out, to grow old." The participle *gīrna*, for example, applies to worn-out clothes. The contraction of the first member is the same as in *æ-tas* (for *ævi-tas*), *æ-ternus* (for *ævi-ternus*).

² From *aus* (Greek οὖς), "ear," and *dio* (cf. *con-dio*), "to place." Compare the synonym *aus-culture*.

to gain admittance in French : but *presser*, *pousser* are used. The verb *flare* yielded but little ; but compounds like *sufflare* (*souffler*), *conflare* (*gonfler*), were adopted.

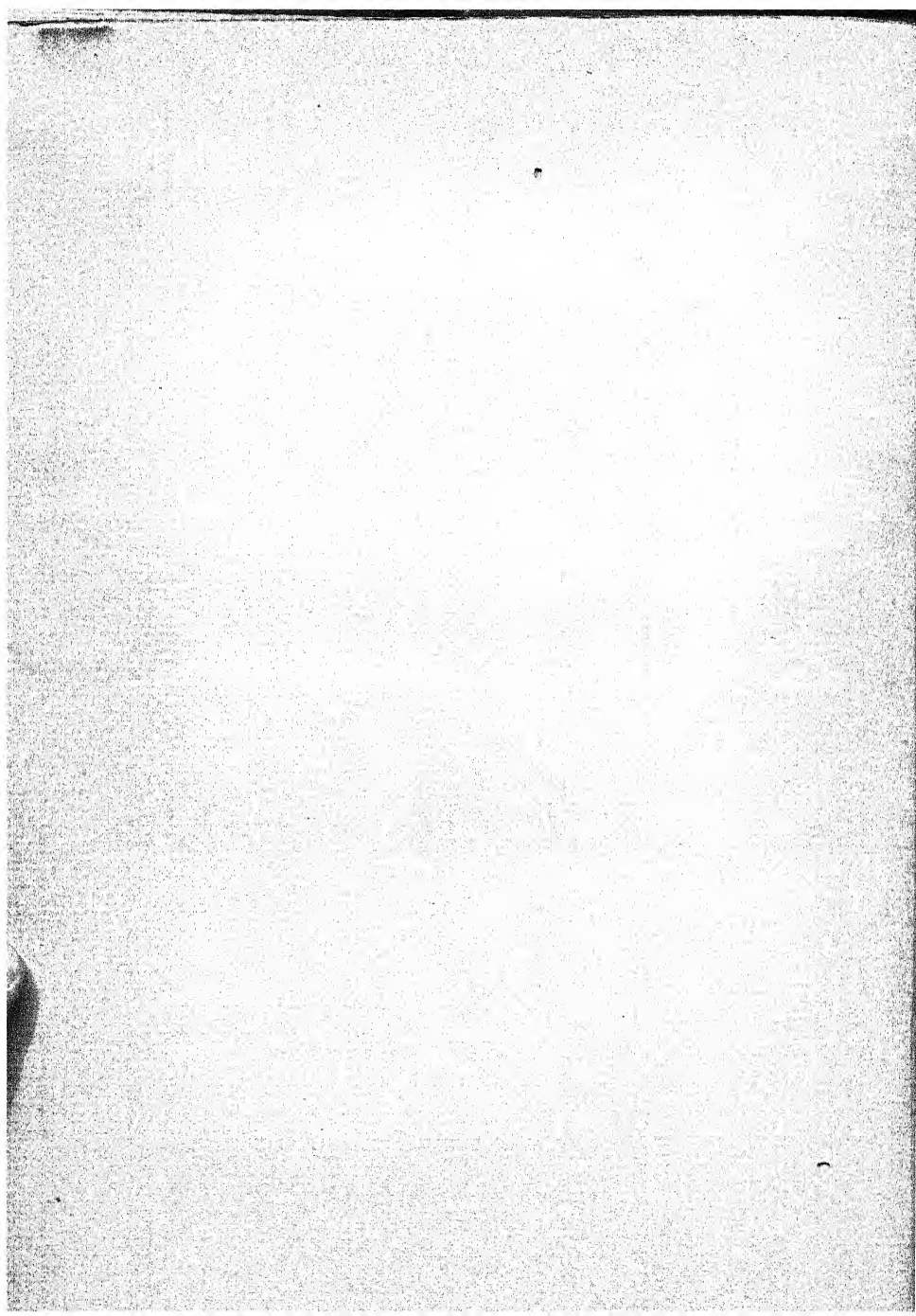
Latin, it seems, found a difficulty in distinguishing between certain synonyms. There were two verbs, *luere*, one signifying "to wash," and the other of a precisely opposite sense, since it meant "to sully, to soil" (cf. *lues*, a stain). But the language avoided the confusion without difficulty, by means of the compound *polluere*, which assumed the signification of the simple verb.

Here again, as in all the laws which we have studied in this first part, we find an intelligent thought, not a blind necessity, at work.

Wherever we look attentively, we see vanishing that so-called fatality which, we are told, should be the law of Language. The phonetic laws do not reign uncontrolled ; they are no more capable of destroying an indispensable or even merely useful word, than they are able to prolong the existence of a superfluous form.

PART II

HOW THE MEANING OF WORDS IS DETERMINED



CHAPTER IX

THE SO-CALLED TENDENCIES OF WORDS

Whence comes the "pejorative tendency"?—The "tendency to deteriorate"—Other tendencies no less imaginary.

IN this second part we propose to examine by what causes words, once created and endowed with a certain meaning, are induced to restrict, to extend, to transfer this meaning from one order of ideas to another, to raise or to lower its dignity, in short to change it. It is this second part which, properly speaking, constitutes Semantics or the Science of Significations.

An illusion against which warning would seem to be superfluous, which is none the less of frequent occurrence, and which at times arrays itself in the garb of science, is the error summed up by the name "tendencies of words." Nothing could be more chimerical. How should words have tendencies? Nevertheless, we hear of a pejorative tendency, of a tendency to deteriorate, etc. One eminent philologist has published a very instructive work, entitled: *Ein pessimistischer Zug in der Entwicklung der Wortbedeutungen*.¹ Another writer, Mr. Abel,

¹ Reinhold Bechstein in the *Germania* of Pfeiffer, vol. viii.

in a memorandum on English verbs expressing an idea of command, says that *to command* has a tendency to descend, but that it inclines always in a good sense. These tendencies must take their place among those "forces" with which the science of the Middle Ages peopled nature. We might as well interpret our economists literally, when they say that the metal silver has a constant tendency to fall in value.

The so-called pejorative tendency is the result of a very human disposition which prompts us to veil, to attenuate, to disguise ideas which are disagreeable, wounding, or repulsive. Aulus Gellius draws attention to the fact that the word *periculum* could formerly be taken in a good sense: and in fact its literal meaning is "experience."¹ That it has come to possess a disagreeable sense is merely the result of euphemism; in the same way in French an army put to the rout is said to have been "*éprouvée*." *Valetudo* signifies "health"; but it has come to mean the contrary, as when we say that So-and-So has "resigned on account of health." To tell a man that he is lying is a serious matter; we prefer to speak of his imagination. And this was first expressed by the verb *mentiri*, which is formed from *mens* as *partiri* from *pars*, or *sortiri* from *sors*. The German *List*, "cunning," began by being a synonym of *Kunst*, "knowledge, cleverness."² *Gottes List*, "the wisdom of God," is an ancient expression. The English *silly* answers to the Anglo-Saxon *saelig*, to the German

¹ Of the same family of words which has given *experiri*, *peritus*.

² From the Gothic *leisan*, "to know."

selig, and meant originally "happy, tranquil, inoffensive."¹ Examples might be indefinitely multiplied. There is nothing in it all save a feeling of consideration, a precaution against unnecessary shocks,—a precaution which whether sincere or feigned is not long efficient, since the hearer seeks out the thing behind the word, and at once identifies them.

The so-called pejorative tendency has yet another cause. It is in the nature of human malice to take pleasure in looking for a vice or a fault behind a quality. The French have the adjective *prude*, which had formerly a good and noble acceptation, since it is the feminine of *preux*. But the spirit of the narrators (perhaps also some feeling of rancour against the loftier virtues) turned this adjective aside towards the equivocal sense that it now bears. Words which refer to the relations of the sexes are especially exposed to changes of this kind. We remember what a noble signification *amant* and *maitresse* still possessed in Corneille. But they are dethroned, as was *Buhle* in German. Here we see the inevitable results of a false delicacy; honourable names are dishonoured by being given to things which are dishonourable.

In Middle-High-German, *Minne* expressed in a general way the affections of the soul: remembrance, friendship, love, and even the love of God. But towards the end of the fifteenth century, the word had to be banished

¹ Cf. the German *albern*, "silly," which corresponds to the Old-High-German *alawar*, "good, friendly." Likewise *simple* in French, *einfältig* in German.

from the language as opposed to decency. It is only in our own days and thanks to studies on the Middle Ages that, after a long period of exile, it has been brought back to honour.

With regard to this so-called pejorative tendency, we should, to be just, also postulate a meliorative tendency. Politeness has singular refinements, and affection curious windings which cause certain terms with an unfavourable meaning to lose their disagreeable element. Friendship, as though in want of appropriate adjectives, changes blame into praise, and turns reproach to more highly-flavoured eulogy. The Italian *vezzoso* (vicious) is defined as "*che ha in se una certa grazia e piacevolezza*." The English *smart* (the same that produced *Schmerz* in German) has become synonymous with "sprightly, lively, pretty."

The Deterioration of words arises from another fact which is no less common, to wit exaggeration. *Afflicted* originally meant "crushed, broken by grief"; it has lost much from having been used out of season. *Abîmer* had in French the same fate as *fatigo* in Latin, which originally possessed a very strong and noble meaning.¹ *Gâter*, *meurtrir*, *gêner*, *tourmenter*,² are examples of the

¹ Virgil uses it where speaking of the persecutions of the gods :

Aspera Juno

Quæ mare nunc terrasque metu cælumque fatigat.

It is related to *fatisco*. *Fessus*, which is of the same family, has itself lost much of its force.

² Already in Latin : *Nè torseris te* (*Pliny the Younger*, ix, 21).

same kind. In English, to be *anxious to see you* merely means to wish to see you. In modern Greek *κάμνω*, "to labour at," has become the ordinary term for "to do"; *κάμνετε μοι τὴν χάριν*, "do me the favour."

As is shown by the last example, Deterioration is often accompanied by a kind of discoloration, which arises from the fact that the word is used in all kinds of associations. The German adverb *sehr* (which should be written *sêr*) signifies "cruelly."¹ The Germans used to say: *er ist sehr leidend, sehr betrübt*. But the discoloration has been so great that they have ended by saying: *er ist sehr brav, sehr froh*.

Any one who takes his stand on etymology without paying attention to the Deterioration of meaning may be led into strange errors. How much has been written on the *compelle intrare* of the Gospels! These words are the translation of the Greek *ἀν' ἑκαστοῦ εἰσελθεῖν*; which signifies "invite them to come in."² There is no question of compulsion.

The Latin *invitare*, which expresses the same idea, is a derivative of *invitus*. It began by signifying "to do violence." But an excess of politeness caused it to be employed on occasions which, from the time of Cicero, gave it the meaning of "to invite."

The German verb *nöthen* or *nöthigen* is an example of the same fact.

¹ *Verschren*, "to ravage," *unversehrt*, "unwounded," are of the same family. The head of the family is the Old-High-German *sêr*, "pain."

² St. Luke xiv. 23.

Another tendency which it is no less chimerical to attribute to Language, instead of seeking the cause among the facts of history, is the tendency to level. *Herr*, in German, was a title reserved to gentlemen ; it is the comparative of an ancient adjective signifying "raised."¹ The House of Lords at Berlin is still called *das Herren Haus*. But at the present day the title is no finer than *Monsieur* in French.

There are decadences that extend even to the pronouns. *Er* and *sie* from having been formulas of politeness, like *ella* in Italian, have descended from their high estate, because a refinement of obsequiousness, in order to go one step higher, substituted the plural pronoun for them.²

The propensity to generalise what at first was made use of by the minority alone, accounts for some facts that are disconcerting at first sight. *Client*, in Latin, meant "he who obeys, the servant."³ A patrician at Rome had clients. Later on, the word designated one who when summoned before the tribunal invoked the protection of a patron in his defence. But in our own days this expression, having passed through the hands first of the doctor, then of the merchant, has ended by assuming a false meaning, for it is contrary to etymology to bestow the name of "one who obeys" on him who gives the orders.

¹ For the lower classes the word *Meister* was used. For example, *Herr Hartmann von Aue, Meister Gottfried von Strassburg*.

² See Grimm's Dictionary, at the word *er*.

³ See above, p. 95.

In our modern societies, the meaning of words is more quickly modified than was usual in antiquity and even in the generations which immediately preceded us. Herein we see the effect of party warfare, of the mingling of classes, of the strife of interests and of opinions, of the diversity of aspirations and of tastes. We need only remember to what a pitch of contempt the formerly respected term *bourgeois* has arrived in France: to such a point indeed that German literature,¹ in order to sound the same note of depreciation, borrows the French word, reserving for *Bürger* its primitive value.

Another cause of acceleration lies in industrial production: thinkers and philosophers have the privilege of creating new words which arrest attention by their amplitude, and by the learned aspect of their structure. These words pass into the vocabulary of criticism and so gain currency among artists; but once admitted into the studio of the painter or sculptor, they speedily come forth in order to spread through the world of industry and commerce, which makes use of them without measure or scruple. So that in a comparatively short time the vocabulary of metaphysics is helping to nourish the language of advertisement.

Language, as is seen, undergoes outward fluctuations in various ways. But besides these changes arising from extrinsic causes, there are also changes which are explicable only by the very nature of Language; these we will • try to make known.

¹ [And English literature too.]

CHAPTER X

RESTRICTION OF MEANING

Why words are necessarily disproportionate to things—How the mind readjusts this disproportion.

ONE fact which dominates the whole subject is that by a necessity, the reasons for which will appear, our languages are condemned to a perpetual lack of proportion between the word and the thing. Expression is sometimes too wide, sometimes too narrow. We do not notice this want of accuracy because, for the speaker, expression adapts itself to the thing through the circumstances, the place, the moment, and the obvious intention of the discourse. At the same time the attention of the hearer, who counts for half in all Language, goes straight to the thought behind the word, without dwelling on its literal bearing, and so restricts or extends it according to the intention of the speaker.

As the facts of Restriction are of the most frequent occurrence we will examine them first.

To designate the roof of a house the Latins used the word *teg-men*, formed from a verb, *tegere*, "to cover," and a suffix *-men*, which serves to mark the instrument. But

tegmen was just as suitable for and also used to mark the shelter furnished by a tree, a cuirass, or any kind of cover or wrapping. If in the place of *tegmen* I have recourse to *tectum*, I find a word which, though already more restricted by usage, offers almost the same combination of verb and suffix. *Tec-tum* designates everything that is covered, consequently the ceiling of a room, the vault of a cavern, the tester of a bed, as well as the roof of a house. We must come down to the French *toit* to find the word at last sufficiently contracted by usage and (it must be added) sufficiently obscured in form to be uniquely and especially suitable to the covering of a house.

By this first example a glimpse is afforded us of the real cause of the disproportion between the name and the thing.

It comes from the fact that the verb is the essential and capital part of our languages, which serves to form substantives and adjectives. Now by nature the verb has a general signification, since it marks an action taken in itself, with no other determination of any kind. When this verb is combined with a suffix the verbal idea may be attached to an active being, to an object which undergoes the action, or to an object which is the product or instrument of the action. But as this action keeps its general signification, the substantive or adjective thus formed will itself possess a general meaning. It must be limited by usage.¹

¹ It would be more accurate in the case of the most ancient words, to say *verbal root* instead of *verb*.

From this fundamental condition of our languages arises the enormous quantity of words with a general signification which have in course of time assumed a special meaning. In proportion as a word becomes restricted, Language is compelled to have recourse a second, a third, a fourth time to the same verb. It is in this way that by the side of *tegmen* we find *tegumentum*, *tectura*, *tegumentum*, *tectorium*, *teges*, *toga*, all words which began with a general meaning, and were eventually reduced to a certain category of objects.

There existed in Latin a substantive *felis* or *feles*, which signified "the female." This name was suitable to the female of all animals, at least of all mammiferous animals.¹ But little by little it came to mean merely the female of cat, and it is with this signification that it has descended to us. How are we to explain this Restriction of meaning? The ancients, who were not unaware of facts of this kind, saw in it the result of a choice, a preference (*κατ' ἐξοχήν*). But in reality it is a simpler matter. There was no choice, or at least the choice came about of itself. When the Greeks of the present day call a horse *ἄλογον*, it does not mean, as has been said, that the horse is pre-eminently the animal, still less "that it only lacks speech," but that the rider, speaking of his mount, was accustomed to say "the animal."

Each profession, each state, each class of life con-

¹ From *fela*, "breast." It is well known that the same root *fe*, "to suckle," gave *filius*.

tributes to this contraction of words, which is one of the most instructive sides of Semantics. In Rome, hay was called by the most general term—*fenum*, "produce." For the Greek peasant cattle were τὰ κτήματα, "possessions." In Greek, an adventurer was called *πειρατής*, from the verb *πειράω*, "to try, to undertake"; but if we consult the usage of the language, we see that there is question of but one kind of enterprise, brigandage by sea, piracy.

The more advanced the civilisation of a nation, the more varied are these Restrictions of meaning; each class of the population is tempted to employ for its own use the general terms of the language; it then restores them with the impress of its ideas, of its particular occupations. Thus the word *species*, which expresses "kind" in the most general way, was used by the druggists of the Middle Ages for the four kinds of ingredients in which they traded (saffron, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg), so that when the word returned to the language, it had become *spices* (*épices*).

It would be easy to multiply these examples. Every one knows the divisions by means of which dictionaries separate the different significations of a single word. In most cases it is but a general word, the meaning of which has been diversified by Restriction.

No one, when employing these words, thinks of the lack of proportion. They are, for the moment, really adequate to their object. If, for any reason, a word grows obsolete in all its acceptations save one alone, it

goes down to future ages, for the greater astounding of the future etymologist, with the unique value which has been left to it. The German word *Getreide* (in Middle-High-German *getregede*) is a derivative from the verb *tragen*, "to bear," and could originally be employed for anything that is carried, such as clothing or baggage; it denoted also what is borne by the earth, more especially corn, and it is in this single acceptance that it has survived.

The more general the signification of the verb, the better adapted is it for the various professions. Thus *facio*, in the language of the temples, means "to bring an offering, to offer a victim." Hence expressions like *facere catulo*, *facere ture*, "to sacrifice a dog, to offer incense." This same verb *facio*, in political language, is applied to the combined action of a party in view of a goal to be attained.¹ There were found on the walls of Pompeii, which, as is well known, was engulfed in the midst of an electoral period, a quantity of inscriptions with this imperative: *Caupones, facite . . . Pomari, facite . . . Lignari, facite . . . Unguentari, facite . . .* This means: "Agree! unite!" Henceforward we understand the meaning of the word *factio*. What characterises the faction is the tie, the pact which binds together all adherents.²

¹ Cicero wrote that all who had lost reputation were collected round Caesar: *Omnes damnatos, omnes ignominia affectos illac facere . . .* Compare also the expression: *tecum facio* (I make common cause with you).

² Taken in this sense the contrary of *facio* is *deficio*. What a faction or a party is least disposed to forgive, is the *defection* of one of the members.

Adulterare is a compound of *alterare*: it had nearly the same meaning. The Latins said *adulterare colores*, "to change colours"; *adulterare nummos*, "to debase moneys"; *adulterare jus*, "to twist the law." But as they also said *adulterare matrimonium*, there has arisen a special meaning which has passed into the derivatives *adulterium* and *adulter*.

We see how necessary it is that our knowledge of a language should be supported by history. History alone can give to words that degree of precision which is needed for their right understanding. Let us suppose, for example, that for a knowledge of Roman magistracies we have no help other than etymology. We should find "those who sit together" (*consules*), "he who walks in front" (*prætor*), "the man of the tribe" (*tribunus*), and so on. These words shed no light, take no definite meaning, save through the recollections which we may possess, from having seen them in the narratives of historians, in the discourses of orators, in the *formulae* of magistrates. History, while explaining these words, introduces into them at the same time many accessory notions which are not expressed. It acts after the manner of a glass, which, by contracting the objects of sight, renders them more distinct. But there is this difference, that while the best microscope can show us nothing in the objects save what is actually there, we are conscious in words like *tribunus*, *consul*, of many ideas which are not present, and which exist only in our memory.

Restriction of Meaning has a peculiar interest when applied to words which bear on moral life. I will give one or two examples, borrowed from the Germanic languages.

In German, the substantive *Muth* is now scarcely ever used save in the sense of "courage": but we have only to note a few of its derivatives and compounds, and to compare a few idioms, to recover the meaning of soul and intelligence which it formerly possessed. *Grossmuth*, "generosity"; *Hochmuth*, "pride"; *Unmuth*, "discontent"; *Uebermuth*, "presumption"; *anmuthen*, "to claim"; *einmüthig*, "unanimously"; *Gemüth*, "soul"; *wie ist es dir zu Muthe*, "in what mood are you?" *muthmaassen*, "to conjecture." It is no doubt owing to having figured in compounds such as *Rittersmuth*, *Mannesmuth*, that the word has been restricted to the sense of bravery. The general meaning has been preserved in the English *mood*.¹

In the same way, *Witz* is scarcely understood to-day save in a very special sense. But in former days this term had a very lofty signification: it designated knowledge or wisdom (from the verb *wissen*). There is no need to go very far afield to recover traces of this ancient acceptation: it is obvious in *Aberwitz*, *Vorwitz*, *Wahnwitz*, and in the verb *witzigen*, "to make wise." Here also English has remained more archaic: *wit*, *wits*; though in English, too, the restricted meaning is the more common.

¹ Note the change of gender which has befallen some of these German compounds: *die Sanftmuth*, *die Wehmuth*. Originally *Muth* was neuter.

The cause of these restrictions furnishes in each case the material of an interesting research. Sometimes it is a synonym which extends itself, and contracts by just so much the domain of its colleague. At other times it is an historical event which comes to modify and renew the vocabulary. Thus the word *Busse*, which meant "reparation" (whether literally or figuratively), took with Christianity, the sense of "penitence": once impressed with the seal of religion all other usages came to an end.¹

In addition to the restrictions of meaning to which language bears evident and lasting witness, there occur, in the speech of all men, perpetual applications of the same principle, which, varied according to time and place, leave no durable traces. "To go to town" is a phrase which is familiar to all country-folk, but which, while remaining outwardly the same, must be translated by a different name according to the region. The events of history may chance to take one of these expressions out of the limited circle in which it had place in order to throw it into general circulation. *Urbs* was the name of the town of Rome for the peasants of Latium and Sabina. But the Roman legions, carrying the word along with them, succeeded in making it familiar to the whole antique world: for the Gaul or the Spaniard, as for the African or the Syrian, *Urbs* was the name designating the city on the seven hills.

¹ *Lückenbüsser*, "stop-gap," is however still used. There exists at Breslau an *Altbüßerstrasse*, "street of cobblers." Cauer, *Programme du Gynase de Hamm*, 1870.

Restriction of meaning has at all times been a cause of astonishment to etymologists. We know the observations and objections of Quintilian on the subject of *homo*: "Are we to believe," he said, "that *homo* comes from *humus*, because man is born of the earth, as if all animals had not the same origin?"¹ Yet it is most certain that *homines* did signify "the inhabitants of the earth." It was a way of opposing them to the inhabitants of the sky, *Dii* or *Superi*.

¹ I. 6.

CHAPTER XI

EXPANSION OF MEANING

Causes of Expansion of meaning—Facts of Expansion are so much information gained for history—They are a consequence of the progress of thought.

EXPANSION of meaning is the counterpart of what we have just been observing. It may be thought surprising to find two movements in opposite directions existing simultaneously. But we must note that the cause is not the same in both cases : while Restriction depends, as has been seen, on the fundamental conditions of Language, Expansion has an exterior cause : it results from the events of history.

A few examples will make this clearer.

In Rome a landed property that had been mortgaged was called *prædium*. The word is a compound of *vadium*, "pledge,"¹ and of the preposition *præ*. But by

¹ *Vadium* is obsolete in classical Latin, where it is replaced by *vadimonium*. But it has reappeared in the Latin of the Middle Ages. The French *gage* comes from it. The Gothic *ga-wadjan*, the Anglo-Saxon *Weddian*, whence the English *wed*, and the German *wetten*, are, in my opinion, borrowed from Latin. Legal

a remarkable Expansion of meaning, all rural property ended by being called *prædium*. It was probably through the language of law that this change came about, dower estates being called *prædia dotalia*.

The particular characteristic after which an object has been named may therefore retire into the background, may even be wholly forgotten. Instead of designating one category only, the word comes to designate the whole species.

The French substantive *gain*, "gain," bears witness to the agricultural life of the ancient Gauls. *Gagner* (*gaaignier*) was to feed flocks; a *gagnage* was a pasturage; the *gaigneur* was the husbandman; the *gain* (*gaïn*) was the harvest. One piece of evidence which has never varied still remains: that is the *re-gain* ("aftermath"). As life became more complicated, the simple *gain* extended its meaning, so that it has designated the produce obtained by all kinds of work, and even that acquired without work.

To agricultural life belongs in like manner the Latin *pecunia*, which first designated wealth in stock, and which ended by designating all kinds of wealth. It is a less known fact that the inverse change took place in the Middle Ages among the Celts of Great Britain. As a compromise had been established between the ancient system of exchange in kind and the new system

terms, about which it was important to have a thorough understanding, passed from the Romans to the Barbarians. On this family of words, see my *Dictionnaire étymologique latin*, at the word *vas*, *vadis*.

of a monetary exchange, certain terms designated in turn either a coin, or its equivalent in land or stock. In Old Welsh *scribl* (Latin *scrupulum*) is a coin; among the Welsh of the twelfth century, *ysgrubl* had the meaning of cattle, beast of burden. In Armorican Britain, the Latin *solidus* became *saout*, which designates stock in general.¹ Among the Anglo-Saxons, on the contrary, the ancient *feoh*, "cattle," came to mean a sum of money.² These facts, of which the contemporaries were unconscious, are explained by alternations of wealth and poverty.

It is important for the historian to observe these transformations of meaning, since they constitute for him indications all the more sure because involuntary. These facts must not be laid at the door of Metaphor. Metaphor is the instantaneous perception of a resemblance between two objects. Here, on the contrary, we are dealing with a slow displacement of meaning. The people continued, as a matter of habit, to use the word *pecunia*, even when the fortune of the Roman citizen had ceased to consist solely of flocks.

The general ideas which humanity has acquired in the course of centuries could not have been given names without this Expansion of meaning. How could time and space have been designated? Time (*temps*) meant in the beginning "temperature, heat." The word is of the same origin as *tepor*.³ Then, in French, weather,

¹ J. Loth, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1896; article on the Celtic law by M. d'Arbois de Jubainville.

² Thence the English *fee*, "recompense, salary."

³ The neuter *tapas*, "heat," exists in Sanscrit. The connection between *tempus* and *tepor* is the same as that between *decus* and

good or bad (*temps, bon ou mauvais*), was thus designated. Finally the abstract idea of duration was reached.

Space was the course on which were run the chariot-races (*spatium*, a word borrowed from the Greek *στάδιον*, Dorian *σπᾶδιον*).¹ In speaking of horses which swerved from the course, the verb *exspatiari* was used. Cicero, when he wanted to say that eloquence had gone astray, said: *Deflexit de spatio curriculoque majorum*. Then the word acquired the general meaning of extent and space.

The verb is the part of speech which presents the most numerous examples of Expansion. When once Language has, in one way or another, made choice of an expression to designate an act, the circumstance—sometimes indifferent or fortuitous—which caused it to be thus named, is promptly forgotten. Who, in pronouncing the French verb *briller*, now thinks of the precious stone, *beryllus*, from which it was derived? Those who created the verb *plumbicare*, which we have turned into *plunge* ("*plonger*"), soon lost sight of the plummet ("*plomb*") which served to weight the net or line, and applied the same expression to everything which goes down, which plunges to the bottom of the water. It is in the nature of the human mind to operate in this way, for we are much more impressed by the act itself, which is a present impression, than by the already

decor, fulgur and *fulgor*. Something of the idea of temperature still remains in the verb *temperare*.

¹ See the *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique*, vi. 3. On the subject of the substitution of *t* for *d*, cf. *cotoneum* = *κυτόνιον*, *citrus* = *κέδρος*.

far-off circumstance which caused us in the first instance to name it.

There existed in Rome a census which recurred every five years, and which was accompanied by a religious ceremony, called "purification": *lustrum*, *lustratio*. As, on this occasion, the magistrate and the priests surveyed the assembled ranks of the people, the verb *lustrare* took the sense of "to survey, to pass in review." Virgil, therefore, speaking of the Ausonian Sea which must be traversed by Æneas, could say:

Et salis Ausonii lustrandum navibus æquor.

But few people think when they say in French, *accablés d'un malheur*, *accablés d'une nouvelle* ("overwhelmed by a misfortune, by bad news"), that they are generalising an expression borrowed from a siege, and that the substantive *cadavalum*, which made *caable*, whence *accabler*, is formed from the Greek *καταβολή*, "overthrow." Still less did the Romans, when speaking of the *splendour* of the sky or of a *splendid* triumph, dream that it was to a sickly colour of the skin, to an unwholesomeness of complexion, that the verb *splendeo* owed its origin.¹

Expansion of meaning is especially frequent in the case of compound words. When once two terms have been joined together to make a whole, the mind no

¹ Σπλην, "the spleen." A man with disease of the spleen was called *splendidus* (cf. *rabidus*, from *rabies*). The ancients located the seat of jaundice in this organ.

longer takes heed of anything but that whole. *Vindemia*, for example, which contains the word *vinum*, is used for other harvests beside the vintages: *vindemia olearum, mellis, turis*. *Parricidium*, which means the murder of a father, expanded with the help of phonetic alteration to the extent of marking all kinds of crimes, to such an extent, indeed, that the Romans even were already seeking out remote etymologies of the word. We here touch on what ancient rhetoric called an Abuse of Language (catachresis). The truth is that catachresis exists only in an early stage, and for one who clings to the letter: for the generality of mankind, these expressions quickly become natural and legitimate. Thus, in Sanscrit, a stable for horses is called *aṇḍa-goshtha*, although *goshtha* is a compound containing the word *go*, "cow." We find the same in Homer:

Τοῦ τρισχίλιαι ἵπποι ἔλος κατὰ βουκολέοντο.

And the same Abuse of Language, under a slightly different form, is to be found in this other line:

Ἄρνων πρωτογόνων ῥέξειν κλειτὴν ἑκατόμβην.¹

Just as it is right to recommend unmixed metaphors, so also would it be puerile to hinder, by the recollection of their birth, the employment of words which have been alienated through long usage from their original signification, and in which there has never been any question of Metaphor but only of Expansion of meaning. The progress of a language consists in being freed

¹ The word *βοῦς*, "ox," being contained in *βουκολέω* and *ἐκατόμβη*

without violence from its origins. Speech would cease if all words had to be restored to the exact meaning which they possessed in the beginning. *Armare naves* is a common expression; but it hides an Abuse of Language, since *armare* signified "to cover one's shoulders."¹ We must leave to the philologist the task of investigating these remote points of departure. The Expansion of meaning is a normal phenomenon, which must have a place among all peoples whose life is intense and whose thought is active.

¹ *Armus*, "shoulder," made *armare*, whence *arma*, which began by designating defensive weapons, in opposition to *tela*, offensive weapons. *Armorum atque telorum portationes* (Sallust).

CHAPTER XII

METAPHOR

Importance of Metaphor for the formation of Language—
Popular metaphors—Divers origins of metaphorical expressions—
They pass from one language to another.

UNLIKE the preceding causes, which work slowly and imperceptibly, Metaphor changes the meaning of words and creates new expressions on the spur of the moment. It is born from the instantaneous glimpse of a similarity between two objects or two acts. If it be accurate or picturesque, or even if it merely fill a gap in the vocabulary, its adoption is assured.¹ But the metaphor remains such at its outset only; soon the mind becomes accustomed to the image; its very success causes it to pale; it fades into a representation of the idea scarcely more coloured than the proper word.

It has been said that the metaphors of a people are an indication of its genius. This is true in some cases; but it must be admitted that for the most part metaphors

¹ According to the remark of Quintilian (viii. 6) it is owing to Metaphor that everything seems to have its name in Language.

teach us little save what we knew already; they demonstrate only the universal intelligence, which does not vary much from one nation to another. We will cite a few examples, with apologies to the reader for their simplicity. Our business is not to claim admiration for these images, which indeed have ceased to be images, but to show how languages are full of them.

As we must fix some limit, we will borrow them all from the same language — Latin. Let us see, for instance, in what manner the Roman people name what is good and what is evil.

What is good: that which goes straight and in order (*recte atque ordine*), which is full and weighty (*integer, gravis*). But lightness is a bad sign (*levis, vanus, nullius momenti*). What is crooked becomes the symbol of all perversity (*pravus*). Intelligence is like a point which penetrates (*acumen*), but folly resembles a blunt knife (*hebes*), or a dish which lacks salt (*insulsus*). A simple character is compared to a garment which has but one fold (*simplex*); motives which are wrongfully alleged are borders to conceal the faults of the stuff (*prætextum*). The motley (*vafer, varius*) is not far removed from deceit.

Up to this point the metaphors of the language are irreproachable; we will now observe certain features of utilitarian ethics. To think is to count (*putare, reputare*).¹

¹ *Putare* has itself acquired the meaning of "to calculate" through a metaphor. *Putare rationes*, "to audit accounts." Varro and Festus said *putare, purum facere*. It was the common expression for the pruning of trees and vines: *putare vitem, arbores*. The word, in its strict sense, is preserved in Old French: *poder*

The valuation or weighing of moneys lends its name to all kinds of estimation or esteem (*æstimare, existimare, pendere*). To deliberate is also to weigh (*deliberare*).¹ Anything which can be bought cheap is despicable (*vilis*);² the value which we attach to objects arises from their rarity (*carus, caritas*).

It is unnecessary to continue. We see at a glance the nature of these examples. They are like the sayings of some peasant endowed with good sense and honesty, but not without a certain rustic cunning. They must be placed below the proverbs, as proverbs denote a more protracted experience, a larger faculty of combination.

Here is another metaphor belonging to the same order of ideas.

Among the old Romans all superfluous expense was a breach of custom, a departure from upright principles. Hence the word *luxus*, a word borrowed from the language of surgery. Cato, giving a receipt for sprains and fractures, said: *Ad luxum aut ad fracturam alliga, sanum fiet* (*De re rustica*, 160). The word, like so many medical terms, is perhaps of Greek origin: *λοξός*, "crosswise"; *λοξόω*, "to dislocate." We have made

pouer ("pouer et tailler la vigne" in *Olivier de Serres*); *pod*, "to prune," in the dialect of the French-speaking Cantons of Switzerland. This *poder*, "to clean," has passed into German: *butzen, putzen* (*den Baum, den Strauch, die Hecke putzen*); then they said: *den Bart, die Haare putzen*; finally the word acquired the meaning of dress, apparel (*die Putzmacherin*, "the dressmaker").

¹ From *libra*, "scales."

² From the same root as *vēnum*, "a sale."

luxation out of it. There were no doubt many kinds of disturbance comprised under this word. *Occultiores in luxus et malum otium resolutus*, says Tacitus when speaking of Tiberius.

We know how much trouble the ancients took in classifying metaphors, and in labelling them according to their kind and species. They rightly declared the number to be immense.¹ This number is even greater than was supposed, for they were by no means cognisant of all. *Exstinguere* had already taken the sense of "extinguish"; yet the flame is here compared to a dart or lance whose point is broken. *Erudire* passed for the proper word meaning "to instruct"; yet it is borrowed from the branch of a tree which has been hewn into shape. In the time of Virgil, the word *tranquillitas*, when applied to the soul, no longer produced the effect of a figurative expression, although it implies a comparison with the transparency of sky or water.² Sometimes the recollection of the metaphor is so completely obliterated that mistakes arise. Cicero was astonished that peasants should have had the idea of giving the name of pearl (*gemma*) to the buds of trees; but the exact contrary is the truth, since it was pearls which, thanks to an imagination not lacking in grace, received their names from buds about to open.³

¹ *Quintilian*, viii. 6. Arsène Darmesteter attempted a classification, for which we refer our readers to the Preface, as yet unpublished, of his etymological Dictionary.

² *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique*, v. 346.

³ *Nam gemmare vites, luxuriam esse in herbis, lætas esse segetes*

When the Science of Language bestows on the meaning of words a part of that attention which it now fixes too exclusively on the letter, it will be able to create for the various languages a curious and instructive list showing the contingent of metaphors furnished by each class of citizens, by each professional body. The weaver gave to the Latin language the words which mean "to begin": *ordiri*, *exordium*, *primordia*. *Ordiri*, was to arrange the threads of the warp for making the woof. Cicero, who was still conscious of the image, makes one of his interlocutors say, not unintentionally: *pertexe Antoni quod exorsus es*.¹ Plautus had already said in the same way:

"Neque exordiri primum, unde occipias, habes,
Neque ad detexundam telam certos terminos."

The word *ordo*, with its long series of varied and important meanings—in politics, in war, in administration, in the arts—is itself a gift from the humble trade of weaver.²

The auspices were of such great importance that it is not surprising to discover traces of them in the common language: the adjective *propitius*, which marked the forward flight;³ the adjective *sinister*, which marked

etiam rustici dicunt (*De Or.*, iii. 38). *Latus*, which Cicero regards as a metaphor, is also the real word ("fat harvests").

¹ The vocable is probably much anterior to the Latin language. We find in Hesychius this gloss: *ῥεπιδὸς ἐφάντης*.

² *Or.*, ii. 33. It is curious to note that the verb *ordiri* has survived in French in its exact primitive sense, *ourdir*. The weaver had furnished it: the weaver preserved it.

³ From a root *pet*, which reappears in the Greek *πέτομαι*, "to fly."

the fatal portents; the verbs *auscupari*, "to watch"; *augurare*, "to conjecture"; *autumare*, "to affirm," which all three contain the substantive *avis*; the adverb *extemplo*, first used for presages arising in the interior of the celestial *templum*; the verb *contemplari*, borrowed from the ordinary occupation of the augurs—all these bear unanimous witness to this fact.

The language of law has been no less fertile. I will cite merely the curious word *rivalis*, which originally designated neighbouring proprietors using the same stream of water, and which has become the name for all kinds of rivalry.¹

The special characteristics of different nations already begin to show in some of the old metaphors. Thus the Greeks, to express the idea of "resource, expedient," use *πόρος*. "What remedy for my woes?" exclaims one of the characters of Euripides. *Τίς ἂν πόρος κακῶν γένοιτο*.² The word *πόρος*, which properly designates a passage, and in particular a sea-passage,³ obviously comes from a people which has been acquainted from early days with the *ὑγρὰ κέλευθα*. An impossible transaction was called *ἄπορον πρᾶγμα*. The revenues of a state were called *πόροι*. Even in modern Greek *ἐμπορέω* means "to be able."

Sometimes a whole historical perspective is discovered in a metaphor. The Greek romance writer Longus, in the history of Daphnis and Chloe, speaks of a wolf-

There was in Rome a *Lex rivalicia* (Festus, p. 340) which regulated the relations between *rivales*.

² *Alcestitis*, v. 213.

³ Cf. *Βόσπορος*, "the Bosphorus."

trap, a gin contrived in the ground. But the wolf does not allow itself to be caught: ἀσθάνεται γάρ γῆς σεσοφισμένης. This σοφίζω presupposes Protagoras, Socrates, Plato, and a long past of philosophical discussions.

The word *influence*, of which so much use is made at the present day, takes us back to the superstitions of ancient astrologers. It was supposed that a certain fluid which reacted on men and on things escaped from the stars. Boileau still used the word in its primitive sense, when in his *Art Poétique* he spoke of the secret influence exercised by the sky on the poet at his birth. The Italian word *influenza* makes allusion to an analogous belief.

All languages might in this way make their museum of metaphors. In German, the verb *einwirken*, often employed in the most abstract sense, answers to the Latin *intexere*. And similarly the Latin *exprimere*, which reappears so frequently in this book, is borrowed from the fine arts, since it suggests an impress: this alone might teach us, were we not already aware of the fact, that the ancients were acquainted with the art of *repoussé*. So many obsolete customs are perpetuated in an expression which has become commonplace: in saying of some great personage that he is *invested* with a title or dignity, no one at the present day thinks of the investiture.¹

¹ How many expressions we owe to the theatre: *to play a part in an affair, to make a scene, a person behind the scenes, a tragedy which took place yesterday, a quick change, a silent part*, etc.

Language reserves one satisfaction for the observer, all the more lively because it is not sought after: the satisfaction, namely, of feeling a metaphor, whose value has not hitherto been understood, suddenly open and reveal itself. Thus we establish a secret harmony between our own thought and the ancient inheritance of speech.

Nothing shows so clearly the power which even at the present day, with our languages long since fixed, individual action continues to exercise. Such an image, born in a capable mind, spreads into common property. It ceases then to be an image, and becomes a current appellation. There is the same difference between the tropes of Language and the metaphors of poets as between a product in common use and a recent conquest of science. The writer avoids figures of speech which have become common: he prefers to create new ones. So Language is transformed. It is this truth that has been sometimes forgotten by our etymologists, who are always prone to suppose a so-called verbal root, as though imagination had ever been at a loss to transfer a word ready made from one order of ideas to another.

A special kind of Metaphor, extremely frequent in all languages, comes from the communication between our organs of sense, which permit us to transport the

• The very name of *person*—*persona*,—which Cicero already used as we do, is a theatrical word, signifying "mask."

sensations of sight into the domain of hearing, or the ideas of touch into the domain of taste. We speak of "a warm reception," "a broad style," "a bitter reproach," "a black grief," with the certainty of being understood by everybody. Modern criticism, which uses and abuses this kind of transposition, only develops what is to be found in the germ in the simplest language. *A deep sound, a high note* were originally images.

The people transfer adjectives whose idea is borrowed from man to inanimate objects: it says "a dumb waiter," "a blind alley," as the Greeks already said *κωφὸν βέλος* (*surdum jaculum*), for a shaft that miscarries, and *μέλαινα φωνή* (*vox atra*) for a hoarse voice. The Hindoos call *anidha-kūpa*, "blind well," a well the opening of which is hidden by plants. Sometimes it is difficult to tell exactly from what organ of the body these expressions came: for example, it was long considered doubtful whether the adjective *clarus* came from sight or from hearing. Without the words *acies*, *acus*, *acutus*, *acer*, we should not know that *acid* (the French *aigre*) did not always belong to the sense of taste.

The Homeric language did not lack words to express the idea of "meditating, preparing." But that did not prevent the poet from creating *βυσσοδομέω* which signifies literally "*intus ædificare*."

"Ἔσθλ' ἀγορεύοντες, κακὰ δὲ φρεσὶ βυσσοδόμενον.

"Holding brave discourse, they builded evil in the depths of their heart."

And elsewhere :

‘Αλλ’ ἀκέων κίνησε κέρη, κακὰ βυσσοδομείων.¹

“He shook his head in silence, building evil within.”

For the same idea, Homer has also the verb *μηχανάω*, which has passed from Greek into Latin.²

It is difficult to recognise the most ancient metaphors. The state of things which suggested them having disappeared, we are confronted with a root of colourless signification. This explains to us how the Hindoo grammarians, in drawing up their lists, could inscribe so many roots meaning “to think, know, feel.” Were it possible for us to go back farther into the past of humanity, we should doubtless find Metaphor everywhere present as in better known languages.

Before leaving this subject, which is infinite, we wish to mention one more point.

Metaphors are not chained to the language which gave them birth. When they are true and striking, they travel from idiom to idiom and become the patrimony of the human race. It is, therefore, for the historian to make a distinction between the images which, being perfectly simple, are found independently in a thou-

¹ *Od.*, xvii., 66, 465.—It is to be noted that it is exactly the same expression as the Latin *industrius* (from *indu* and *struere*). Something of the ancient pejorative sense has remained in the expression : *de industria*.

² Not always in an evil sense : *ἄναξ Παιῶν, ἔξευρε μηχανάν τιν’ Ἀδμήτῳ κακῶν* (Euripides, *Alc.*, 221). “Find, O Apollo, some help for the woes of Admetus.” A man without resources, an impossible thing, were called *ἀμήχανος*.

sand places, and these which, invented but once in one particular language, have been subsequently transmitted, borrowed and adapted. Metaphors are translated, as may be seen by such examples as *decide* and *entscheiden*, *discover* and *entdecken*, *comprehend* and *begreifen*, *succumb* and *unterliegen*, *confirm* and *bestätigen*.¹ The difficulty is to know in each case whether there has been a loan, and who is the borrower. Among the old nations of Europe there exists a common fund of Metaphor which arises from a certain unity of culture. Nations which have attained rather late to the same degree of civilisation are not slow to translate this stock of metaphorical expressions and make it their own. It would hardly be just to reproach them for it, since they do but use the same right as their elders, a right from which there is no reason to exclude them. I am thinking at this moment of the Greek nation which is accused of doing what every nation of Europe has done in its turn.² I will give a single example. To express "I am not in accord with you," the Greeks say: ἐγὼ δὲν συμφωνῶ. Is not this the same as the German: *Ich stimme nicht mit Ihnen überein*? Or merely: *Es stimmt nicht*? Was this to be forbidden to them because we chose to create the word *symphony*? For that matter, the Greek has

¹ On these imitations, examples of which are to be found in all languages, see L. Duvau, in the *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique*, viii. 190. An interesting specimen is the French *compagnon*, which has its prototype in the Gothic *gahlaiba* (from *hlaifs*, "pain," bread).

² See the imitations of Latin by old Irish, *Journal de Kuhn*, xxx. 255, article by Zimmer.

all the appearance of being in this case the original, and we the imitators, since as early as in the Egyptian papyri of the time of the Ptolemys we find *σύμφωνον* in speaking of a *harmony* made between two parties.

The law of metaphors is the same as for all signs. A metaphor having once become the name of an object, may again, starting from this second stage, be employed metaphorically, and so on. The result of this is that the modern languages are more complicated study for the philologist than the ancient. But for the child who learns to speak them the complication does not exist: the last meaning, the meaning farthest removed from the original, is often the first learnt. What is called *argot*, or slang, is largely composed of metaphors, more or less vaguely indicated, yet it is a language which can be learnt as quickly as any other.

CHAPTER XIII

ABSTRACT WORDS AND CONCRETION OF MEANING

What is to be understood by Concretion of meaning—Examples drawn from various languages.

THE richness of our languages in abstract words is considerable. We shall later on have to investigate the origin of this wealth, and the manner in which it has been the most active instrument of progress. For the moment, we wish to study a fact which I shall call, for lack of a better term, Concretion.¹ This is what it is: an abstract word, instead of keeping its abstract sense, instead of remaining the exponent of an action, a quality, or a state, becomes the name of a material object. This fact is very frequent; sometimes the modified word preserves both meanings, sometimes, the abstract idea being forgotten, the material signification alone survives.

This phenomenon goes as far back as the history of our languages, and continues under our eyes. I shall begin by examples drawn from ancient languages.

A very simple suffix which served to form nouns of

¹ From the Latin *concretio*.

action was the feminine suffix *-ti* (nominative *-ti-s*), which we find in Greek in the shape of *-σι-s* in words like *γένεσις*, "birth"; *γνώσις*, "knowledge"; *χρῆσις*, "custom"; *κρίσις*, "decision"; *πτῶσις*, "a fall," etc. It is the suffix seen in the Latin *ves-tis*, "the action of clothing one-self." But from this general meaning it came to mean the object which served that purpose, and *vestis* was the name of the garment. If *vestis* is feminine, it dates from the time when it was an abstract noun.

Let us take another example borrowed from alimentation. The Latin suffix *-tu-s* produces abstract substantives like *cantus*, *adspectus*, *gemitus*, *conatus*, *cultus*. Among these substantives appears *fructus*, "the action of enjoyment," from *fruor*. Plautus still used it in its strict sense.¹ But this abstract noun has solidified to the point of designating the fruits of the earth and of trees, to such a point indeed that when we say "to live on the fruits of one's labours," we seem to employ the word in a metaphorical sense.

The suffix which gave in Latin the nouns in *-tas*, like *dignitas*, *cupiditas*, in Greek the nouns in *-της*, like *δικαιοσύνης*, "justice"; *φιλότης*, "friendship," served to form nouns expressing a quality or a state. But we find it already becoming opaque in certain Latin words: *civitas* meant originally the quality of citizenship; then the same word was taken to designate citizens as a whole; it ended by signifying "the city." *Facultas*, formed from the adjective *facilis* or *facul*, denoted the possibility of doing; but *facultates* became a synonym of riches.

¹ *Casina*, iv. 4, 16. *Scio, sed meus fructus est prior.*

The same suffix existed in Sanscrit and in Zend, under the form *tāti* or *tāt*. Already in the Vedas, *dēva-tāt* designates not only the divine quality or nature, but the gods as a whole (as when we say *Christianity*).¹

Legio meant originally "levy": it is formed like *internecio*, *obsidio*. Then it became the name of an absolutely fixed military unit, "a legion." To denote the idea of a "levy," new words such as *delectus* had to be formed.

A similar change took place in the case of *classis*, which is the Greek *κλῆσις*, Dorian *κλᾶσις*, and which became the Roman name for the fleet, after having first designated the army in general. The primitive meaning was "roll-call."²

Regio, formed like *legio*, signifies "direction." *Rectā regione*, "in a straight line." *E regione*, "in front." *Deflectere de rectā regione*, "to leave the direct way." But this meaning has given place to a far more material sense: *regio* came to signify a country or the quarter of a town.

The Latin suffix *-tion*, which became of such great importance, and which is related to the preceding one, formed abstract nouns such as *lectio*, *admiratio*. But from the earliest times, Concretion began to make itself felt. *Portio* was originally the act of sharing; then it became the name of the portion.³ *Mansio* was the act

¹ *Rig-Vēda*, iii. 19, 4; *ā vaha dēvatātīm*, "bring us the gods."

² It is curious to note that *classe* has returned to its ancient signification in French military language.

³ From a root *por*, "to assign," which appears in the Greek *ἐπορον*, "I have procured"; *πέπωται*, "it has been attributed."

of stopping; in Cicero it is opposed to *discessus*. It was used afterwards for relays established at intervals along the roads, and it finally produced the French *maison*, the English "mansion."¹

Our readers will now begin to see why so many material objects are feminine; from being abstract they have become concrete, but without changing their gender.² Must we believe that our ancestors had a faculty of abstraction which has gradually diminished in their descendants? That would, I think, be a great illusion. We will return later to this question of abstract nouns, which contains, in part, the secret of the richness of our languages. It suffices for the moment to remember that, as Language is a work of collaboration, every abstract word is in danger of changing its sense, when, by passing from mouth to mouth, it goes forth from the inventor to the mass.

The history of religions, of institutions, and even of sciences might furnish us with the proof of this. These abstractions of Language, abandoned from the first moment to the popular mind, were with still more reason exposed to the same fate.

Modern languages abound in examples of a like change of meaning; we find in all professions abstract

¹ We say in the same way *habitations*, *constructions*. Homer even said of Ulysses at the time that he was about to build himself a ship: *εὖ εἰδὼς τεκτοσυνάων*, "skilled in construction."

² There exist indications which allow us to believe that the Latin nouns in *-tus*, like *exercitus*, *amictus*, were first of all feminine. We find in Ennius: *non metus ulla tenet*. Cf. Greek feminines like *πρακτός*, "action," *θελεκτός*, "enchantment."

nouns which have become the names of some tangible object. The musician understands by *overture* the orchestral piece which precedes an opera, the merchant supplies the *novelties* of the season, the financier calls in his *credits*, and so on. The stages of this transformation can be easily observed in the case of certain substantives. La Bruyère, in the portrait of Distract, said: "*Il écrit une seconde lettre, et après les avoir cachetées toutes deux, il se trompe à l'adresse.*" Here *adresse* was still taken in the sense of *directio*. In the seventeenth century, *economies*, *alms*, *charity*, had not yet coagulated into material objects as at the present day.¹

There is here a mine of surprises for the etymologist. We find in the Venetian dialect of the Middle Ages a word *rità* which has the meaning of "descent." Whence comes this *rità*, which, even by its inflection, leads the reader astray? Certain comparisons which cannot be called in question have proved that we are here concerned with the word *heredità*, which by shedding its abstract signification came to designate the heirs instead of the heritage.² Something of the same kind occurred in the case of the German *Kind*, which means "child," but which first meant "the race," as is shown by the English *mankind*, "human race."

¹ Although the infinitive resists this change to a greater degree, we yet observe that a certain number of French infinitives, such as *devoir*, *plaisir*, *loisir*, have not escaped.

² Rajna, in the *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Lincei*, 1891, p. 336.

CHAPTER XIV

POLYSEMIA

What Polysemia means—Why it is a sign of civilisation—Why it causes no confusion—A new acceptance is equivalent to a new word—Indirect Polysemia.

WE have just seen some of the reasons why words change their meaning. To be sure, they are not the only causes, since Language, besides obeying its own laws, is subjected to the rebound of outward events, which evade all classification. But without prosecuting this inquiry, which would be endless, we wish at this point to make an essential observation.

The new meaning of a word, whatever it may be, does not make an end of the old. They exist alongside of one another. The same term can be employed alternately in the strict or in the metaphorical sense, in the restricted or in the expanded sense, in the abstract or in the concrete sense. In proportion as a new signification is given to a word, it appears to multiply and produce fresh examples, similar in form, but differing in value.

We shall call this phenomenon of multiplication *Polysemia*.¹ All the languages of civilised nations have their part in it. The more meanings a term has accumulated, the more it may be supposed to represent the various sides of intellectual and social activity. It is said that Frederick II saw in the multiplicity of meanings one of the superiorities of the French language. He implied, no doubt, that these words of manifold meanings were the sign of a more advanced culture.

We must imagine Language as a vast catalogue in which are recorded all the products of human intelligence. Often, under the name of one exhibitor, the catalogue refers us to different classes.

Let us give some examples of this Polysemia.

Key, borrowed from the mechanical arts, belongs also to music. *Root*, which comes to us from agriculture, is equally connected with mathematics and philology. *Base*, a term of architecture, has its place also in chemistry and in military science. *Act* belongs at the same time to the theatrical and to the legal vocabulary. And so in other cases. It was in no way different among the ancient languages. *Σύνταξις*, in a book of grammar, means syntax, and in the account of a war the 'order of battle. *Μέλος*, which is the name for the members of the human body, is also a term used in prosody and in music. The substantive *ἀφορισμός*, derived from the verb *ἀφορίζω*, "to assign limits, to define," meant on the one hand the material delimitation of a territory, and on the other hand the definition of an object or idea.

¹ From *πολύς*, "numerous," and *σημείον*, "signification."

In this latter sense it supplied medicine and philosophy with the word *aphorism*: in the former sense, there still remains Monte Aphorismo, a spur of Penteleicus. In the time of the Roman empire, the substantive ἐπιδημία, followed by a proper noun, meant the voyage of the sovereign across his states. We find, for example, in a Syrian inscription: ἐπιδημία θεοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ. But in medical language the same word, followed by the name of an illness, signified a contagious disease prevalent in a certain country, an *epidemic*. Σύριγξ, in modern Greek, designates, in accordance with the context, a flute, a fistula, a syringe, or a tunnel.

It will be asked, how it is that these meanings do not thwart each other; but we must remember that each time the words are placed in surroundings which pretermine their import. When we see the doctor at the bed of a patient, or when we enter a chemist's shop, the word *prescription* assumes a colour which in no way suggests a legal terminology. If we see the word *ascension* printed on the door of a religious building, it does not remind us of aeronauts, of mountain climbs, or of the height of the stars. We are not even troubled to suppress the other meanings of the word: these meanings do not exist for us, they do not cross the threshold of our consciousness. It is bound to be so, since happily the association of ideas is for most men based on essentials of things, and not on the sound.

- What we say of ourselves is no less true of the listener. He is in the same situation; his thought follows, accom-

panies, or precedes our own.¹ He speaks inwardly at the same time that we do : he is therefore no more exposed than we are to being troubled by collateral significations which are dormant in the depths of his mind.

A new acceptation is equivalent to a new word. This is proved by the precept—by no means artificial, but confirmed by general opinion—that a word used successively in two different meanings must be repeated. Moreover, it is allowable to make a word rhyme with itself, if the two meanings are sufficiently removed from one another.²

It would not therefore be accurate to treat words as signs which disappear at one stroke. A word may have long fallen into oblivion in its proper meaning, and yet have survived in an indirect sense. *Danger*, in its strict sense, which is "power," exists no longer, but it continues to be used as a synonym of *peril*.³

Sometimes, after a more or less lengthy sojourn in some particular department of a language, a word is inscribed twice over in the general catalogue, but spelt differently. It is in this way that the French get the *desseins* (designs, purposes) of God and the *dessins*

¹ Victor Egger, *La Parole Intérieure*.—"What we call *hearing* often comprises a beginning of silent articulation, of feeble, faintly-indicated movements, in the vocal mechanism." (Ribot.)

² "*Les accommodements ne font rien en ce point ;
Les affronts à l'honneur ne se réparent point.*"—CORNEILLE.

³ "You stand within his danger" (Shakespeare). *Être au danger (au pouvoir) de ses ennemis, tirer quelqu'un du danger de mort*, used to be said in French. It is the Low-Latin *dominiarium*.

(designs, drawings) of Raphael ; the *chambre des Comptes* (audit-room), and the *Contes* (tales) of the Queen of Navarre. These differences exist among all nations and in all languages ; half-knowledge triumphs over them, although at bottom they are not to be wondered at, and sometimes even are not without a certain value.¹ It is difficult to draw up a rule on the subject. Nevertheless I will propound one: Respect distinctions which are ancient and made in good faith ; abstain from creating fresh ones of set purpose.

So true is it that the bifurcation of meaning can make two or even several words out of a single word, that the grammatical changes which modify the one leave the other untouched. The Latin verb *legere* changes its *e* into *i* in the compounds : *eligere*, *colligere*. But when it means "to read," it keeps its *e*: *perlegere*, *relegere*. An author of the seventeenth century² draws attention to the fact that the French *bon* has for its comparative *meilleur*, except when, taken in a bad sense, it means "foolish, simple," as in this example : "*Vous vous étonnez, dites-vous, qu'il ait été assez bon pour croire toutes ces choses : et moi, je vous trouve encore bien plus bon de vous imaginer qu'il les ait crues.*" Distinctions of this kind exist everywhere. A German author observes that *roth* makes in the comparative *röther*, except when it has reference to political colour, in which case it makes *rother*. Rather than turn observations of this nature into ridicule, we

¹ It is so to a certain extent in the case of words like proper nouns, such as Smith, Smyth, and Smythe, which, starting from a single type, are found in the Directory with their special orthography.

² Nicolas Andry.

should do well to inquire into their cause, which lies in the fact that grammatical rules are kept up by usage, and that words belonging in their diverted meaning to a later epoch, evade the rule. The French are accustomed to make of *ciel* the plural *cieux*: "*Celui qui régne dans les cieux, jusqu'au haut des cieux.*" But they say of a painter that he takes pains with his *ciels*, not at all for the pleasure of making a futile distinction, but because art criticism only created its language in the eighteenth century.

We have not yet exhausted this chapter on Polysemia. There is an indirect or secondary Polysemia, which it is as well not to confuse with the other, although the two are very generally confounded. A few examples will show wherein they differ.

In Latin, *truncus* designates the trunk of a tree; it also means "mutilated, incomplete." But it would be a mistake to pass straight from one meaning to another; there is an intermediary, which must not be omitted. From *truncus*, "trunk of a tree," there came *truncare*, "to cut down, to pollard a tree," and this *truncare* produced the adjective *truncus*, which has but a remoter relationship with the older form.

Another example is the Latin *examen*, which means at the same time "swarm" and "examination." In order to know the reason of this Polysemia, we must turn to the verb *exigere*, which means sometimes "to lead out" and sometimes "to weigh." Suetonius reports that Caesar had a taste for pearls, and that he liked to

weigh them in his hand : *sua manu exigere pondus*. It is, therefore, only through the verbs from which they are derived that the two meanings are united.¹

A word may thus be brought, by a long or short series of intermediaries, to mean almost the opposite to that which it first signified.

Maturus meant "matutinal." *Lux matura* was the light of dawn. *Ætas matura* signified youth. *Faba matura*, the early bean, in opposition to *faba serotina*. An early winter, *matura hiems*. Hence arose the verb *maturare*, "to hasten," which Virgil uses with *fugam*.² Applied to the produce of nature, *maturare* took the meaning of ripening, and, as ripening implies time, the adjective *maturus*, under the influence of the verb, ended by becoming an epithet signifying "wise, well thought out." *Maturum consilium*, "a well-matured plan." *Centurionum maturi*, "the oldest of the centurions" (Suetonius). This meaning is therefore almost opposite to that which was accepted for *maturus*, in the beginning. A dictionary which bracketed together the two meanings might give colour to the opinion maintained a few years ago by a philologist, that Language began by the identity of contraries.

¹ An example in French of this indirect Polysemia is *grenadier*, which designates alternately a soldier and a species of tree. To find the point of junction, we must go back to the "*grenade*" (grenade or pomegranate). It is by this sham Polysemia that the spirit of words is especially fed.

² *Maturate fugam, regique hæc dicite vestro* (*Æn.*, l. 146). *Maturandum Annibal ratus, ne prævenirent Romani* (Livy, xxiv. 12).

CHAPTER XV

A SPECIAL CAUSE OF POLYSEMIA

Why an expression can be mutilated, without losing anything of its signification—Abridgment, the cause of irregularities in the development of meanings—Expressions known as “pregnant.”

A VERY frequent cause of Polysemia, which evades foresight and classification, is abridgment. It happens, for example, that of two words primitively associated, the one is suppressed. At this sudden removal the remaining term seems to change its meaning abruptly. In this case, it would not be accurate to say that there was either Expansion or Restriction. The event which has come to pass is of a different nature: like an heir who becomes the sole owner of a property which had previously been a joint possession, the last survivor succeeds to an entire idiom and absorbs its signification.

This fact deserves a moment's attention, for nothing better demonstrates the real nature of Language.

When two words have been habitually used in conjunction, the one may be suppressed with no disadvantage whatever to the idiom of which it forms part:

sometimes even the expression gains thereby in energy. This is owing to the fact that when once the meaning of the two words has combined, they thenceforward constitute only a single sign. Now a sign can be cut, clipped, reduced by half; provided it is recognisable, it still fulfils its original function. We can imagine the strange accumulations of meanings which must arise, since there is nothing to prevent the suppression of the most essential portion. It is of no use to make categories, according as the first or the second word has been removed, according as the adjective or the substantive is the survivor. The only rule which holds good is this: the portion which survives takes the place of the whole; the sign, though mutilated, remains adequate to the object.

Examples of this practice are innumerable: the articles in our dictionaries would not display their present length, if the verbs had not absorbed into themselves the meaning of a complement which could thenceforward be omitted, if the adjectives had not been enriched by the value of an implied substantive, or if whole phrases had not been compressed into a single word.

Many apparent incongruities vanish in the light of this simple truth. As modern languages are generally more charged with meaning than ancient (for the very simple reason that the experience of the human race is longer), we will begin by borrowing a few examples from them. It is true that when these facts suggest themselves to us in the present, they seem hardly worthy

of our attention. Yet what we find in the past, though more difficult to recognise, is of the same nature.

Everybody knows that *the House* means "the House of Commons" (French, *la Chambre* = *la Chambre des Députés*); that when we speak of members of the *Cabinet*, it is the Cabinet of Ministers which is implied. We should at once be puzzled by this word *minister*, were we not aware that at Rome, in the time of the Empire, *minister* signified "servant of the prince." *Prince* again takes us back to a yet earlier abridgment, *princeps senatus*, "first of the senate." It is in this way that from age to age words assume the meaning of lost companions. Without this kind of intussusception Language would soon take undue developments.

It has been supposed that absolute power especially favoured the multiplication of these phenomena, since the idea of a sovereign placed all that concerned or approached him on a unique footing. Thus at Versailles *le lever* was the reception of the king; *avoir la plume* meant to imitate the writing of the king and keep up the correspondence in his stead and place. But there is in this nothing but a fact which recurs at all times and at every stage of society. At a certain epoch of the French Revolution, suspected citizens were *décrétés*: it seemed unnecessary to add *d'accusation*. In the legal language of France, *instruire* means to inquire into a contention, a law-suit. In the language of tuition, *instruire les enfants* means to supply children with necessary know-

ledge. In a regiment, *donner le mot* means *donner le mot d'ordre*, "to give the word of command." In Rome, *æris confessus* was a man who admitted a debt; the full idiom would have been *æris alieni*.

In every situation, and in every profession, there is a certain idea so present in the memory that it seems unnecessary to state it in speech. The epithet which serves to specify the idea is alone expressed. Hence the quantity of adjectives which, in time, take their place among the substantives. The geometrician speaks of *the perpendicular*, the *oblique*, the *diagonal*. The French writing-master speaks of *la ronde* (round hand), of *l'anglaise* (a small hand), of *la bâtarde* (a sloping hand). These abridgments are so well known that it is needless to dwell on them. But we must note how faithfully, in French, the gender of the implied substantive is preserved: *à la Française*, *à l'étourdie*, *de plus belle*, *à droite* is still said, although the substantive, which is *mode*, *façon*, *manière*, *main*, long since ceased to be expressed.¹

The Roman family, *familia*, was composed of children and of slaves; hence arose the two adjectives, *liberi* and *famuli*. Both have been substantives from time immemorial.

In Greece, the brother born of the same parents was *καὶ τέτυγος*. The brother on the father's side only,

¹ Most of the problems relating to gender must be solved in this way. *Oriens*, *'occidens* are masculine because of the implied *sol*. *Rosa* is feminine on account of *oratio*. *Ovile* is neuter because of *stabulum*. We are here speaking, be it well understood, of substantives of secondary formation only.

ὁμόπατρος or ὁπατρος. The brother on the mother's side only, ἀδελφός. With all these words, φράτωρ had to be understood, which, having become useless, had dropped out of ordinary language, though it survived in the language of politics.

There is no doubt that if we could go farther back than the Indo-European period many of the substantives of that period would be revealed to us as adjectives.

It is obvious that a large field is opened to Polysemia by these suppressions. The adjective *novellus* (English *novel*) is one of the diminutives so common in the familiar language of Rome. *Novellæ*, then, was said speaking of young vines, leaving *vites* to be understood. But Roman legists, speaking of constitutions given to the empire after the codification of Justinian, also used the word *Novellæ*, with *leges* understood. These examples are so frequent that it is unnecessary to multiply them: we know how sorely double meanings have been misused by the punster.

Words designating an article of daily use like *leaf*, *card*, *board*, *table*, owe their Polysemia to the suppression of the determinative. It would be wrong to attribute this variety of meaning to the word itself: the meaning made its entry subsequently, by abridgment of the idiom. Etymology might in such a case become the most misleading of guides, were not knowledge of things added to knowledge of words.

Old-fashioned philologists, who had noted a certain

number of facts of this kind, invented an original denomination in order to describe them. When the verb absorbed into itself the signification of its complement, they said it was *pregnant*. The expression is pretty though inaccurate, for to place gestation *after* a divided existence is to defy the usual order of things, and to do violence at once to chronology and to natural history. Be that as it may, this absorption is extremely frequent, especially in the language of divers professions and estates. The meaning of the complement enters then in some degree into the verb, and gives it a wholly characteristic signification. We know, in the language of devotion, the meaning of a *practising* Christian, or in French of *un malade qui est administré*. What is more common than the verb *déposer*? But when we speak of a witness who *deposes*, everybody understands that there is question of information given to justice. To *heave* can be said of any object that is raised or projected: but, in nautical language, the order to *heave to* has a special signification.

In the presence of a hearer of some information, it natural to suppress what is self-evident. In the sixteenth century, the expression "a woman possessed" gave rise to no uncertainty: it meant a woman possessed by the devil. When in the reports of the law courts the French newspapers announce *une affaire de mœurs*, the reader understands that it refers to an offence against morals.

Sometimes suppression changes the meaning of the

surviving word to its own advantage. We have a characteristic example of this in the word ποιητής.¹

It is commonly believed that, in the eyes of the Greeks, the poet was "the creator" and the poem "a creation." This sounds very fine and places the poet very high. But the truth is rather different. After a first epoch, that of the ἀήδοι, when poets were their own interpreters, came another period in which a distinction was made between the author of the verses and the singer or actor who merely reproduced them in public. Then μελῶν ποιητής, or ἐπῶν ποιητής was said in opposition to ῥαψῳδός or ὑποκριτής. So by abbreviation, ποιητής, when odes or dramas were in question, signified the author of the lines, exactly as when, at the end of a play, the public now calls for the "author." But this twofold function faded gradually from the memory. The poet, still keeping the same name, though he had no more need for a spokesman, seemed to owe his title to some higher conception: and it is surrounded with this halo of nobility that the name appears to us to-day.

We owe the Latin expression *defunctus*, for designating the dead, to an idiom whose simplicity was not devoid of beauty. It must be completed by *vitâ*, that is to say, "one who has accomplished life," a difficult and serious function. *Defunctorum memoria*, is the memory of those who, having served their time in the army of the living, have received their discharge. By a similar sentiment *migrare*, in Grégoire de Tours, means "to

¹ See on this word an article by M. Weil in the *Annuaire de l'Association pour l'encouragement des études grecques*, 1884.

die." *Ad dominum* or a *sæculo* is understood. We will here transcribe the reflections of M. Max Bonnet.¹ "All fixed expressions have this in common : that the words, by dint of being placed together, react to some degree on each other, and each acquire part of the signification of the other. . . . It may happen also that one of the two, by itself alone, arouses in the mind of the reader the idea usually expressed by both."

A few examples of expressions in which abridgment has brought about a remarkable change of signification in much used words will end this chapter.

When a Frenchman says : *entendre un orateur, entendre un discours*, he uses *entendre* in the sense of "to hear." But in reality it means "to apply." *Intendere* stands for *animum intendere*.² This change of meaning is moreover an ancient one. We find already in Grégoire de Tours : *Quos sæpe conspiciit et intendit*.³

Defendere meant originally "to remove"; *defendere ignem a tectis, defendere hostes ab urbe*. It is by an abbreviation that *defendere urbem, defendere domos* were said. *Mactare* meant "to enrich, to amplify"; by an abbreviation *mactare deos bove* became *mactare bovem*, "to sacrifice an ox." *Adolere* meant "to increase, to

¹ *Le latin de Grégoire de Tours*, p. 255.

² The regular construction required the dative. The French still say : "*Il ne veut entendre à rien. Je ne sais auquel entendre.*"

³ The idiom which is condemned by grammars : *fixer un but, fixer une personne* is of absolutely the same nature. But it made the mistake of coming at an epoch when language no longer lends itself to the same extent to these abridgments.

enrich"; by an abbreviation *adolere aram ture* became *adolere tus*, "to burn incense."

Thus Language, wherever it is closely examined, shows an idea which remains intact while its expression is restricted and abridged. In spite of the somersaults to which these ellipses subject the history of words, we must recognise in them the normal and legitimate work of the mind.

CHAPTER XVI

COMPOUND NOUNS

Importance of meaning—The order of the terms—Why Latin forms less compounds than Greek—Limits of Composition in Greek—Sanskrit compounds—Compounds have never more than two terms.

THE Composition of nouns forms an attractive chapter of Indo-European philology, for it shows us more clearly than any other the part played by the genius of the nations; it even reveals to us individual action, so that grammar already to some extent borders upon literary criticism. Moreover, since the Indian theory has cleared the ground and provisionally marked the divisions, this question has become the object of numberless investigations.¹

It is the semantic side which has so far been forgotten

¹ A bibliographical list will be found in the *Studien* of Curtius, v. p. 4, et vii. p. 1, also an enumeration of more recent works in Brugmann, *Grundriss*, ii., p. 21. We will also mention two French books, both of them important: Meunier, *Les Composés syntactiques en grec, en latin, en français* (Durand, 1872); Ars. Darmesteter, *Traité de la formation des noms composés* (2nd edition, 1894).

in these studies. You might think, from reading the works cited, that questions of accentuation, of the connecting vowel, of the order of terms, were all-important. I fear that the essential, which is to know the meaning, has been forgotten; for it is the meaning, and nothing else, which makes the compound, and which finally determines its form.

It is a primordial condition that, in spite of the presence of two terms, the compound should make the impression of a simple idea on the mind. 'Ακρόπολις designates, not a city more or less lofty, but the fortress, the citadel; δολόμητις is synonymous with the French adjective *ruse*; πολύτροπος corresponds exactly to the Latin *versutus*.

Such is the necessary and at the same time the sufficing condition. Thus brother-in-law, step-sister, grand-father, although having nothing to distinguish them outwardly, are compounds, because the mind, instead of dwelling successively on both terms, perceives nothing but the whole.

An attempt has been made to distinguish these compounds from compounds such as ἀκρόπολις, by describing them as juxtaposed. But the line of demarcation is visible to the grammarian alone. Words like *aquæductus*, *terræmotus*, *legislator*, *jurisconsultus*, *fideicommissum* were also considered as juxtaposed, because the first term bears the mark of an inflection; but for the Latin language they were compounds; it is this fact indeed which explains the phonetical and grammatical peculiarities which appear in some of them, such as *crucifixus*,

manifestus, triumvir. Crucifixus has shortened its first *i*. *Manifestus* has disfigured the ablative *manū*.¹ *Triumvir* has acquired and fixed a genitive plural, which owed its existence to idioms like *lis trium virum*. As soon as the mind unites in one single idea two notions previously distinct, all kinds of reductions or petrifications of the first term become possible. But these are accessory facts, the presence or absence of which makes no change to the essence of things. True Composition has its criterion in the mind.²

Philologists have laboriously discussed the order of terms, which is not the same in all languages. This is attaching considerable weight to a question of secondary importance. The order of terms within the compounds, is generally determined by the habitual order of words in the phrase. *Legislator*, which is in juxtaposition, is constructed according to the usual method of the Latin language. *Signifer*, which is a compound, is constructed in the same way as the two component words would be constructed in the regular course of speech. The advantage of this order is that it allows the principal portion, which comes last, to assume the inflection of either the nominative, the accusative, or any other case according to the general construction of the phrase.

¹ *Festus*, past participle of *fendo*, "to knock." *Res manifesta* is a thing that can be touched with the finger.

² These considerations should be decisive in a discussion concerning the orthography of nouns such as the French *arc-en-ciel*, *chef-d'œuvre*, *cul-de-sac*, etc. There is no doubt that the decision ought always to be in favour of unification.

But we know that Greek often abandons this order : the attempts which have been made to explain compounds such as *φιλόξενος* according to the Sanscrit type have been far from convincing. It has not been sufficiently remembered that we are here entering upon a domain in which the special originality of each nation has a freer play. It is impossible for the individual to create at will a new inflection whether of noun or of verb, because the elements out of which grammatical inflections were formed have long since dropped out of circulation : but it is not forbidden to individual initiative to attempt after its own fashion the joining together of compounds, each part of which conveys a meaning, and forms a word by itself. The Greek custom of choosing for proper names compounds such as *Θεόδωρος*, *Νικόστρατος*, *Δεώκριτος*, and then of reversing the order, so as to form *Δωρόθεος*, *Στρατονίκη*, *Κριτόλαος*, may have contributed to the habit of freely handling these words. We here see a self-conscious liberty making its appearance in the language.

The question has been raised why Latin forms fewer compounds than Greek, and the reason given is a lack of "plastic power," a metaphor which begs the question, and is entirely devoid of meaning. Certainly poets were not without a desire to imitate the compounds of the Greek language. Attempts of this kind are not lacking. Why then have these compounds a borrowed look? Why were the Latins themselves the first to laugh at them? It was no doubt because the

popular mind has to be prepared for the creations of poets by the language of every day. On the other hand, ancient compounds such as *princeps*, *pauper*, *simplex*, were already too much restricted and contracted by pronunciation, and had already lost too much of their transpiciuity, to serve as initiation or as guide.¹

It is with reference to compound nouns that Lucretius, having to find an equivalent for the Greek *ὁμοιομέρεια*, makes his complaint on the poverty of the Latin language, *patrii sermonis egestas*. Quintilian has an analogous observation: *Res tota magis Græcos decet, nobis minus succedit*. Yet it must not be thought that Latin possesses no compounds: were they to be all collected together, the list would be long. The language of the calendar alone offers a certain choice, like *armilustrium*, *refugium*, *fordicidia*, etc. Law shows an equal number: *judex*, *manceps*, *justitium*, etc. What the Latin language does lack are such fine epithets of pure ornament as *ἀργυρότοξος*, *βωτιάδνειρα*, *κερδαλέφρων*, which are so abundant in Greek poetry. One feels that the model of epic poetry was wanting.

Though multiplying compounds of this kind, Greek seems at the same time to have fixed a limit for itself. It created them to designate a permanent quality, a constant action, but not to indicate a transient fact, or an accidental attribute. Achilles, for example, was

¹ If English had no compounds save those like *world* (for *wer-old*, "age of man"), or *lord* (for *hlāf-ward*, "one who distributes bread"), the English language would have preserved the use of compounds to no greater extent than French.

called ὤκους; but he was not called βλητόπους or τραυτόπους to show that he had just been wounded in the foot. Briareus of the hundred arms was called ἐκατόγχειρ; but Greek would not have allowed a compound ἐκατόχειρ, "with arms spread out," or λιτόχειρ, "with a stone in his hand."¹ It relegated to the phrase and to the verb the care of marking these transitory conditions. We know that this was not the case in Sanscrit: there it constantly happened that a compound, all packed with momentary circumstances, absorbed into itself the whole movement of the phrase, which was thereafter left with nothing more to say. But Composition is for Sanscrit a sort of alternative course which permits it to evade syntax almost entirely.

It was in this way that from *krōdhas*, "anger," and *gita*, "vanquished," a compound *gita-krōdhas* was formed, "one who has vanquished or mastered his anger." Out of *prāpta*, "obtained," and *gīvika*, "provision," arose *prāpta-gīvika*, "one who has the necessities of life." From *kāma*, "desire," and *tjaktum*, infinitive of the verb *tjaḡ*, "to leave," came *tjaktu-kāma*, "having the desire to go away."

Words like the above are by no means uncommon in Sanscrit. This language introduces into an epithet circumstances which are foreign to the subject, as for instance the hour of the day or the number of people present. From *mātrī*, "mother," and *šaṣtha*, "sixth,"

¹ In Sanscrit, *grāva-hasta*, from *grāvan*, "stone," and *hasta*, "hand," is an epithet applied to the priest who crushed the soma. Cf. F. Justi, *Zusammensetzung der Nomina*.

Sanskrit makes *mātrī-śaśtha*, an epithet given to the five brothers Pāndavas accompanied by their mother. This is translated by "having their mother for sixth (companion)." It is from *asthi*, "bone," and *bhūjas*, comparative of *bhūri*, "much," that Sanskrit makes *asthi-bhūjas*, which signifies "composed chiefly of bones, being nothing but skin and bones." From *daśa*, "ten," and *avara*, "inferior," it makes *daśa-avara*, an epithet for the assemblage of ten persons *at least*. This is a real abuse, which has extended the faculty of Composition beyond due limits, and which has had the counter-effect of starving all other means of expression.

It might be supposed, no doubt, that Hindoo grammarians, faithful to their systematic views, have sometimes interpreted as compounds, and treated as such, small phrases where words are placed end to end, according to a fairly loose construction, in which neither rules of agreement nor rules of subordination are found. This is a suspicion which we cannot avoid when we see the extraordinary explanations to which commentators have recourse. We find, for example, that in a narrative *nihcṡvāsa-paramā* (sighing a great deal) is translated by "regarding sighs as the supreme thing," while *cintā-parā* (very pensive) is rendered "holding meditation for the chief good." One wonders if these are not artificial interpretations, and if there is not hidden behind the so-called compounds a less strictly regulated condition of Language.¹ An examination of the modern languages

¹ To go back to the examples quoted above, the following interpretation would be quite comprehensible: "the five brothers,

of India, the usages of which come through Sanscrit, will help to solve these questions.

I have made this digression for the purpose of showing that the different parts of a language are mutually dependent, and that by developing one of them unduly, we tend to diminish the power of some other. I should add that modern German, which makes great use of Composition, is to a certain extent exposed to a like danger, not indeed in the works of Goethe and Schiller, or of other writers of their rank, but in the ordinary language of daily use, specimens of which may be found in the last page of any newspaper.¹

I said above that the genius of the nations begins to appear in this department of grammar.

To the Greek language belong those peculiar and embarrassing compounds, the first member of which ends in *σι* : *φιλησίμολπος*, "a lover of songs," *τερψίχορος*, "one who enjoys dancing," *λυσίπους*, "one who rests from fatigue," *φθισίμβροτος*, "destroyer of men," *ὠλεσίοικος*, "one who destroys the house," *Ἀρκεσίλαος*, "a defender of the peoples," *ἀλεξίκακος*, "one who represses evil," *σωσίπολις*, "one who saves the city," etc. There has been no lack of explanations to account for their first

Pândavas, the mother for sixth." And similarly with the others. They say in French : "*Il vient, les cheveux hérissés, le visage en feu*," without its being possible to explain these fragments of a phrase from the point of view of French syntax.

¹ *Präsidentenwahlkampf*. — *Postdampfersubventionsvorlage*. — *Vierwaldstätterseeschraubendampfschiffgesellschaft*. — *Das einjährigfreiwillige Berechtigungswesen*. — *Heute verschied Frau . . . Chef-redacteurs-wittve der Allgemeinen Zeitung*.

term; but this is not the place to discuss them. We think that the origin was a rather emphatic phrase, such as the popular imagination is quite capable of inventing, "the Salvation of the City," for instance, or "the Bulwark of the People." It is in any case the fact that no similar compound is found elsewhere. The Latin poets indeed attempted something of the same kind. *Versicolor* recalls ἀμειψίχρους, *fluxipedus* is an imitation of ἑλκεσίπεπλος. But these forms were never acclimatised in Latin. The Greeks, on the contrary, even at the present day form compounds of this kind: ἀλεξικέραυνος signifies "lightning conductor," and ἀλεξιβρόχιον "umbrella."

There is a certain pleasure in collecting Greek creations of this kind: δακέθυμος, "that bites into the heart," ἐλέπολις, "taker of towns," χαίρεκακος, "who rejoices in evil," ἐθελορήτωρ, "who pretends to be an orator," δοξόσοφος, "who thinks himself wise," φαινομηρίς, "who shows her thighs" (speaking of women of Sparta), ἀμβολογήρα, "who puts off old age" (surname of Aphrodite among the Spartans).

I will mention yet one more form which has been especially developed in Germanic languages.

German contains a certain number of compounds such as *himmel-blau*, "sky-blue," *schnee-weiss*, "snow-white," *stock-fest*, "firm as a stump," in which the first term serves as specimen of the quality denoted by the second. Modern language has worked freely upon this model; and compounds of this sort are very numerous. We will only quote: *thurm-hoch*, "high as a tower," *blei-schwer*, "heavy as lead," *eis-kalt*, "ice-cold," *felsen-*

fest, "firm as a rock," *leichen-bleich*, "pale as a corpse," etc. Some of these terms of comparison have passed out of the words which gave rise to them into others with which they have no concern, and in which, whether intentionally or not, they produce an odd effect. It is in this way that, in imitation of *stock-fest*, "firm as a stump," the Germans said, *stock-taub*, "deaf as a post, stone-deaf," *stock-blind*, "completely blind," *stock-finster*, "pitch-dark." From having said *stein-hart*, "hard as a stone," they said *stein-alt*, "old as the stones," *stein-müde*, "dead-tired," *stein-reich*, "very rich."¹

The languages which prefer Derivation to Composition are formed of a less tractable material; they lend themselves less easily to the creation of new words, for which they must not only choose a suffix, but prepare the first part of the word. Thus French, to obtain derivatives of *frère*, makes use of Latin (*fraternel*, *fraternité*). It is clear that languages which habitually employ compounds, and in which the very suffixes were originally independent words, have no need to fight against difficulties of this kind. I will mention one example only. The traveller Bleek, speaking of the *clicks* of the tongue in common use among the Hottentots, employs, to designate certain exceptional dialects which are devoid of them, the compound *clickless*. Neither French, nor any of the Romance languages could compete with

¹ Instead of saying: *Es schreit zum Himmel*, "it cries to heaven," German, by an ellipse, whose boldness is cloaked by custom, can say: *Es ist himmelschreiend*. There has no doubt been an amalgamation with compounds like *himmelklar*, *himmelweit*, "clear as the day," "far as the sky."

English in this particular. But it is not by chance that the idea of "purity," whence came the Della Cruscan and the French Academy, should have been hatched among the nations which make use of derivatives.

But we must not imagine that a nation is ever prevented from forming the new words of which it is in need. If French harks back to Latin, it is because it has in a manner grown up under its eye and is attracted to it by a time-honoured habit, grown stronger from century to century. Had this great reservoir failed, the genius of the people would have looked elsewhere. The homogeneity of certain languages such as Lithuanian, arises from their self-dependence. Custom and greater convenience—that is what we find: we must speak neither of compulsion nor of an inevitable law.

In closing the chapter, I will recapitulate the principle that governs the matter.

Whatever the length of a compound, it never comprises more than two terms. This rule is not an arbitrary one: it arises from the nature of the human mind, which associates ideas in couples. It may chance that each of these two terms is in itself a compound. Thus in the Aristophanic word *στρεψοδικοπανουργία*, the second term *πανουργία*, is a derivative of *πανούργος*, which is formed from *πάν* and *ἔργον*, and on the other hand *στρεψόδικος* itself contains two words. But it is clear that each of the two parts counts for one element only. The important question in such a case, is to make the division in the right place: that is the chief difficulty of languages which are too lavish of Composition.

CHAPTER XVII

ARTICULATED GROUPS

Examples of Articulated Groups—Their use.

LIKE the various parts of a mechanism, which we are so accustomed to see fitting into one another that we do not think of imagining them apart, Language contains words which have been so long united by usage, that, for our intelligence, they no longer exist separately. These I call Articulated Groups. Their importance in Syntax is very great. It will be sufficient to give as examples the French expressions *parce que*, *pourvu que*, *quoique*, *attendu que*, *afin que*, etc. There is no language without a certain number of these. They were thus adjusted by the hand of our ancestors, and provided for posterior ages as prop or lever. These Articulated Groups are for the ordinary speech of daily life what formularies are in law or in administration.

The most of men make use of them without having ever given them a thought. They have become so thoroughly incrustated in our mind that they determine

its movements. We only properly realise them when we compare our own with a foreign language. Whenever two different populations come into contact, the mistakes and errors committed on both sides reveal their presence.¹

If the lettered classes were to disappear, the Articulated Groups would form solid blocks; and it is the blocks, not the component parts, which would survive to furnish the elements of a future language. Everybody knows that the word, in its isolated state, has no very clear existence in the popular consciousness, and that it is apt to join on to that which precedes or follows it. Telegraph offices, where words are counted one by one, must have gathered on this subject an ample harvest of observations. For purposes of interrogation the French make use of the group *est-ce que*; for expressing doubt, of the group *peut-être que*; for explaining the motives of an action, of the group *c'est que*; all of which seem to us now to be expressions of single growth. In modern Greek the future is indicated by means of the particle *θα* followed by subjunctives: *θα λέγει*, "he will say." This particle *θα* is nothing but the amalgam of the group *θέλει να*, "he wishes that."² These facts should make us cautious on the subject of ancient particles, so short,

¹ M. Hugo Schuchardt has studied the language spoken by the Slavs and by the Germans of Austria, from this point of view. He has attempted to catalogue and enumerate the mistakes caused on both sides by an ill-timed recollection of the mother tongue. They are practically the same mistakes which are made at school, and upon which our professors adjudicate.

² *θαλά* is still found for *θα*, in the Epirot dialect.

but so often full of meaning, which Pott compared to those light substances one pinch of which is sufficient to change the taste and flavour of a dish.¹

Not only do these Articulated Groups preserve the entire signification of the elements of which they are composed; they also acquire a certain value which does not properly belong to them, but which results from the position which they habitually occupy in the phrase. I take as example the French word *cependant*, in which we now suppose ourselves to detect an opposition. Nothing in this word denotes opposition. But as it often happens that two concomitant facts are enumerated in order that they should be opposed, the adversative idea has little by little crept in. In the same way we imagine that we feel a sense of opposition in the Latin conjunctions, *quamvis*, *quanquam*, *etsi*, *etiamsi*, *licet*, etc. All these words are merely affirmatives; some of them even exaggerate the affirmative element, allowing it to be emphasised to any extent in order to bring out all the more the fact which is held in reserve, and which is coming to limit or contradict the first proposition.² The hearer, prepared by custom, so clearly foresees this second assertion, that no sooner does the first appear, than he is conscious of the antithesis.

¹ See, for example, the ingenious analysis of the Latin particle *an*, by James Darmesteter, in the *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique*, vol. v.

² "*Quamvis sis molestus, nunquam te esse confitebor malum*" (Cicero, *Tusc.* II. 25, 61. It is pain which is in question). "Be thou as importunate as thou choosest, I shall never admit that thou art an evil."

These expressions, having passed into the condition of an indissoluble group, preserve grammatical forms which no longer exist in the ordinary language. Thus the Latin *duntaxat*, contains the aorist of the subjunctive of the verb *tango* analogous to λύση, λέξη. An ancient neuter substantive *regum*, signifying "direction," is contained in the adverb, *ergo*, for *e rego*, "in a straight line, in consequence."¹ In the German *nur*, we have a small proposition: *ne wære*, "were it not." The modern Greek *ās*, which expresses an invitation (*ās λαλήσωμεν, ās εισέλθωσι*), represents the ancient imperative *āfes*, "permit."

The more closely we examine Language, the more new semantic stratifications we find. This long labour was necessary in order that a somewhat condensed train of reasoning should be communicated to others without digression or obscurity. All men can now profit by this labour: it is so easy to handle these Articulated Groups, that one is tempted to believe that they have always existed. The child learns to manage them, as he learns to use the inheritance of his fathers. Yet we have but to look at the more backward nations to see not only that they have more difficulty in making themselves intelligible, but also that, not finding any support for their thought, they have to make greater efforts in order to preserve it in the mind, and to remain its masters.

These Articulated Groups, which have been the instruments of the syntax, and by the help of which the period is unrolled, may be transferred by imitation from one

¹ Cf. *e regione*.

language to another. We are even tempted to believe that the form of the period was invented once and for all: when we read a Latin *Senatus Consultum*, or one of those *Epistolæ* addressed to the provinces by the Roman Emperors, we recognise in them the same arrangement as in the edicts of our parliament and the decrees of our kings. The most immaterial part of our languages is never lost. Phonetics and morphology are right to distinguish that which comes through conscious imitation from that which comes through popular tradition: between these two elements there can be no fusion. But in Semantics this distinction is useless. Even if interrupted at certain moments, the chain of progress can always be linked together again.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOW NAMES ARE GIVEN TO THINGS

Names given to things are necessarily incomplete and inaccurate—Opinions of the philosophers of Greece and of India—Advantages of phonetic change—Proper names.

WE have reserved for the end of this second part the question which is generally asked at the outset of any study on Language: How did men go to work to give names to things? What we have seen in the preceding chapters provides an answer.

One conclusion is to be drawn from all that has gone before: it is an undoubted fact that Language designates things in an incomplete and inaccurate manner. *Incomplete*: since we have not exhausted all that can be said of the sun when we have declared it to be shining, or of the horse when we say that it trots. *Inaccurate*: since we cannot say of the sun that it shines when it has set, or of the horse that it trots when it is at rest, or when wounded or dead.

Substantives are signs attached to things: they contain exactly that amount of truth which can be contained

by a name, an amount which is of necessity small in proportion to the reality of the object. That which is most adequate to its object is the abstract noun, since it represents a simple operation of the mind: when I use the two words *compressibility*, *immortality*, all that is to be found in the idea is to be found also in the word. But if I take a real entity, an object existing in nature, it will be impossible for language to introduce into the word all the ideas which this entity or object awakens in the mind. Language is therefore compelled to choose. Out of all the ideas it can choose one only; it thus creates a name which is not long in becoming a mere sign.

For this name to be accepted it must no doubt originally possess some true and striking characteristic on one side or another; it must satisfy the minds of those to whom it is first submitted. But this condition is imperative only at the outset. Once accepted, it rids itself rapidly of its etymological signification; otherwise this signification might become an embarrassment. Many objects are inaccurately named, whether through the ignorance of the original authors, or by some intervening change which disturbs the harmony between the sign and the thing signified. Nevertheless words answer the same purpose as though they were of faultless accuracy. No one dreams of revising them. They are accepted by a tacit consent of which we are not even conscious.

The reader will here recognise the subject of many discussions in Greece and India. The debate begins for us in the *Cratylus* of Plato. Socrates alternately supports

either of two opinions: first, that there exists for each thing a name by nature belonging to it; next that the propriety of a name is wholly dependent on the consent of men. This discussion lasted as long as there were schools of grammar in Greece and Rome. It is not so well known that the same question occupied the schools of the Brahmans. "If the grass is called *trīṇa*, from its quality of pricking (*trī*), why does not this name apply to everything that pricks, as for instance a needle or a lance? And on the other hand, if a column is called *sthūnā* because it stands upright (*sthā*), why is it not also called that which supports, or that which fits in?"¹

Whether from a more or less rational belief in the necessary truth of Language, or from respect for ancestral wisdom, it has been the unfailing habit, at every epoch and among all nations, to refer to words for information concerning the nature of things. Reference was not always made to the mother tongue, which was both too well known and in too close proximity, but rather to some more ancient language. This conviction of the *ὁρθότης ὀνομάτων* is universal. Yet a little reflection might have shown that it is scarcely reasonable to expect lessons in physics or in metaphysics from Language, a work of improvisation, in which the most ignorant man has often the largest share, and on which accidental events have set their mark. Yet this conviction has been a freak of every epoch. I will say nothing of the ancients, nor of the learned men of the Middle Ages, but we see even the head of the sensualist school of the

¹ Jāśka, *Nirukta*, at the beginning.

eighteenth century, Condillac, a prey to the same illusion. He has been discussing the qualities or appearances of bodies. "As soon," he says, "as qualities distinguish bodies and form their manner of being, there is in the bodies something which these qualities modify, which is their support or subject, which we represent to ourselves as being below, and which for this reason we call *substance*, from *substare*, to be below." The ancestor of the ideologists here reasons like a pupil of pure scholasticism.

How should Language teach us about substance and quality? It can but give us the echo of our own thought: it registers faithfully our prejudices and our mistakes. At times it may astonish us, like a child, by the frankness of its answers or the ingenuousness of its representations; or it may furnish us with valuable pieces of historical information, of which it is the involuntary depositary;¹ but to take it for teacher and for master would be to misjudge its character.

Do words created by scholars and men of science possess a greater accuracy? We must not count upon it. In the seventeenth century, Van Helmont, with a vague recollection of the Low Country *gest*, "spirit," calls bodies which are neither solid nor liquid by the name of *gas*. That is as vague and incomplete as *spiritus* in Latin or

¹ If all the monuments of pottery and sculpture had perished, the words *effigies*, *figura*, *figere*, would still show us that the Romans were not strangers to the plastic arts. The single substantive *invidia* would tell us that the superstition of the *jettatura* existed in Rome. Such is the nature of the information furnished by Language.

ψυχή in Greek. A French chemist, having discovered a new metal, and being moved by a feeling of patriotism, called it *gallium*; a German scientist, no less patriotic, retorted with *germanium*. Now these designations tell us as little about the essence of things as do the names of *Mercury* or *Jupiter* given to planets, or those of *ampère* and *volt* recently given to quantities in electricity.

Everybody knows that learned names have been given by mistake. Christopher Columbus called the inhabitants of the New World *Indians*. A French department owes to a mistaken reading the name of *Calvados*.¹

We can therefore sum up after this fashion :—

The more the word is detached from its origin, the more is it at the service of thought : in accordance with the experiments which we make, it is restricted or expanded, specified or generalised. It accompanies the object which it serves as label through all the events of history, rising in dignity or descending in the scale of opinion. At times even it passes over to the very opposite of its initial acceptation ; and is better adapted to its many parts the more completely it becomes a mere sign. Phonetic change, so far from doing harm, is favourable to it, since it conceals its former relations with other words which have remained nearer to the initial meaning or have gone off in different directions. But

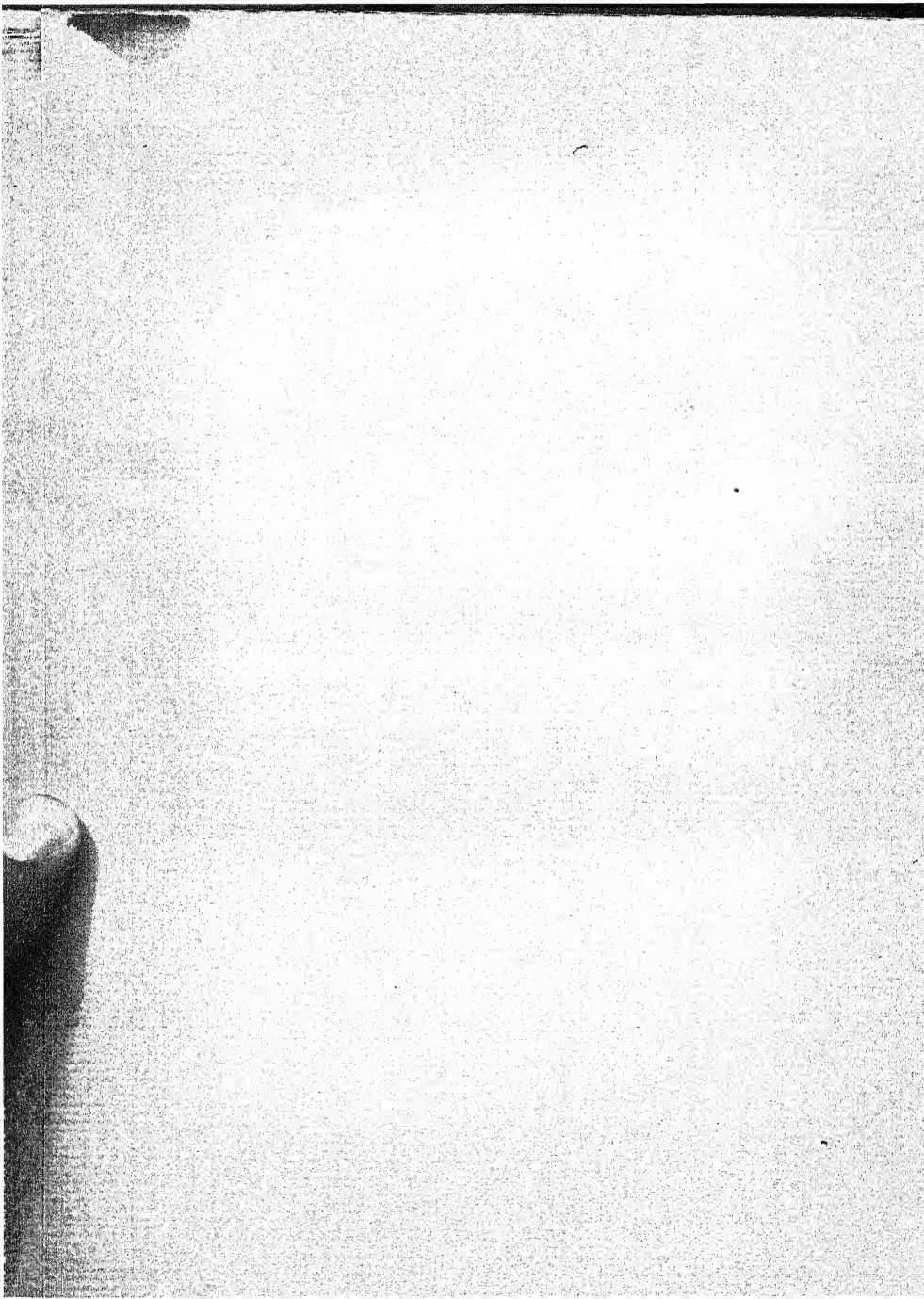
¹ It is well known that *Calvados* is for *Salvador*. The mistake arose through a map of the diocese of Bayeux of 1650, which bears these words : *Rocher du Salvador*. Without a misreading of the name the rock would never have had such good fortune.

even if phonetic change does not come in, the actual and present value of a word exercises such a power over the mind that it deprives us of all feeling for the etymological signification. Derivatives can with impunity abandon their *primitive*; and, on the other hand, the *primitive* can change its meaning without affecting the derivatives. Although the Latin word *venus*, which was originally neuter, and which signified "grace, joy," was adopted to designate the Greek Aphrodite, the verb *veneror*, "to revere, honour," has preserved its chaste and religious meaning.

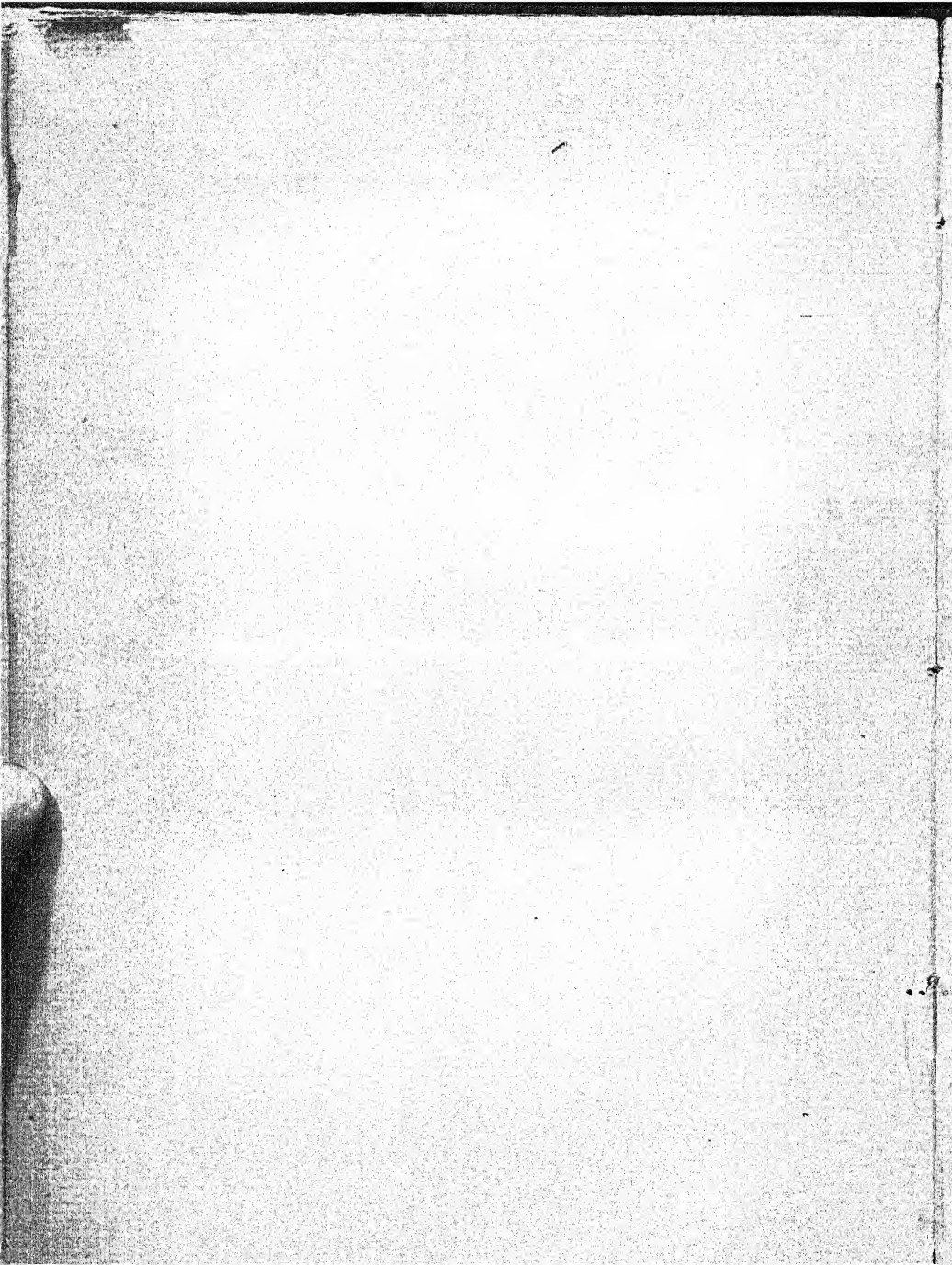
It has been maintained that proper names, such as *Alexander*, *Cæsar*, *Turenne*, *Bonaparte*, formed a species apart, and were beyond the pale of Language. And this opinion has some arguments in its favour. First of all, the etymological sense of proper names is of no value at all; again, the names pass from one language to another without being translated; finally, their phonetic transformation is far less rapid. Nevertheless it may be said that between proper names and common names there is but a difference of degree. They are, so to speak, signs at a second power. If their etymological meaning counts for nothing, we have seen that the same observation applies to ordinary substantives, whose progress consists in leaving their starting-point. If they pass from one language to another without being translated, they possess this peculiarity in common with many names of dignities, functions, usages, inventions, costumes, etc. If they share less in phonetic change, that is due to the

special care with which they are preserved, and they have this characteristic in common with certain religious or administrative words.

The difference then between proper and common names is wholly intellectual. If names were classified according to the variety of ideas which they evoke, proper names should head the list: being the most individual, they are the most significative of all. An adjective like *augustus*, in becoming the name of Octavius, acquires a wealth of ideas once foreign to it. On the other hand, we have only to compare the word *Cæsar*, taken as designating the adversary of Pompey, and the German word *Kaiser*, which signifies "emperor," to see how greatly a name loses in significance in becoming a common name. Whence we may conclude that, from a semantic point of view, proper names are the most important of all.



PART III
HOW SYNTAX IS FORMED



CHAPTER XIX

THE PARTS OF SPEECH

What we are to understand by the parts of speech—How they exist in the mind—Are they innate or acquired?—Do they all date from the same period?

HAVE the parts of speech, such as substantive, adjective, pronoun, adverb, always existed, or are they a gradual acquisition? This question is not identical with the problem of the origin of Language, since there are certain languages which, even at the present day, do not distinguish between the parts of speech, and it is quite possible that our own idioms may have passed through a like stage. The question therefore concerns facts of comparatively recent date, for which observation should not be declared *à priori* impossible.

Not only is it not impossible, but the means of information supplied by the history of the Indo-European languages go back far enough to allow us to see several of these parts of speech formed under our eyes. Let us begin with the most modern.

One of the most recent is the adverb. Words such

as οἶκοι, πέδοι, χαμαί, εἶ, κακῶς, οὕτως, *humi, domi, recte, valde, primum, rursum, hic, illic*, are substantives, adjectives, or pronouns regularly declined. But when a word has ceased to be in an immediate and necessary relation to the rest of the phrase, when it serves to determine more fully some other term, without, however, being indispensable, it is ready to take the value of an adverb. If it ceases in the smallest degree to be perfectly clear in its construction, if above all any appearance of irregularity be in the least degree visible, it is classified apart.

Not that we are to imagine anything pre-established and innate in the mind. But, since our Indo-European languages are so formed as outwardly to distinguish words according to the part which they play in the phrase, the mind is accustomed to certain inflections usually encountered in this rôle of a loose and superfluous complement, and converts them into adverbial inflections. Such is the origin of the inflections *ως* in Greek, *ē* and *ter* in Latin.

The first deposit of this kind was doubtless formed by a few words which we may be allowed to consider earlier than the invention of our grammatical mechanism, and which, by the singularity of their aspect, and by the absence of inflection, claimed a place in a class apart.¹

The recent date of adverbs is proved by the fact that the Indo-European languages are not in agreement as to choice of inflections. Greek has nothing similar to the Latin adverbs in *tim* or in *e*; nor has Latin anything

¹ Such are (to enumerate them under their Greek form) ἀπό, περί, ἐπί, πρό, ἐνί, etc.

like the Greek adverbs in *δον, δην, ις, θεν, θα*. This disagreement, which does not exist in conjugation or declension, indicates a less ancient formation.

And yet it may be said that the adverb does exist in our intelligence as a separate part of speech. In French, a special inflection, which is an ancient substantive diverted to this use, serves as its exponent, but even without this inflection we recognise the adverb by the part which it plays in the phrase: *Il faut parler haut*. —*Des voix qui ne chantent pas juste*.

The preposition is even more modern than the adverb. At the time that our languages separated, there was not one single genuine preposition. We have indicated above the origin of this part of speech. A time came for all our languages, when the cases, not clear or precise enough in themselves, were escorted by an adverb. So it is that the ablative, which by itself alone marks the idea of removal, was accompanied by *ab* or *ex*. The accusative, which marks the place to which motion is directed, was accompanied by *in* or by *ad*. Now these words *ab, ex, in, ad*, were originally adverbs of place, as may still be seen in most cases by referring to their most ancient form and usage. But the habit of seeing them joined to a certain case suggested the relation of cause to effect; the little word which used to be a mere accompaniment of the accusative or ablative now appeared to govern them. Thenceforward it did in fact govern them; from adverb it became preposition.

The preposition has been so firmly impressed on our

minds as a word which must be followed by an objective case, that it is difficult to understand a preposition employed alone; it calls for, it awaits its "complement." In the time of Plautus and of Terence, *præ* could still be used as adverb.¹ But a little later it is only found followed by an ablative. The Romance languages, faithful in this to the Latin tradition, inherited ancient prepositions, formed new ones, and applied themselves to separating the preposition from the adverb as clearly as possible; the distinction between *dans* and *dedans*, between *sous* and *dessous*, etc., to which Corneille had not yet attained, has become a rule of modern French.

The agreement which exists on this point between the diverse languages of Europe (since everywhere we see prepositions forming themselves after the same manner) proves that, given the general plan of their grammar, the creation of the preposition was a foregone conclusion. From the moment that inflections needed the co-operation of a word to specify them, this word perforce appeared after a certain time the cause of the inflections.

It is interesting to see how this part of speech has borrowed words from all corners of the horizon. In French, participles like *excepté*, *passé*, *hormis*, *vu*, *durant*, *pendant*, adjectives like *sauf*, substantives like *chez*, all do duty as prepositions. In Latin, *penes*, *secundum*, had already the same fate.²

¹ Plautus, *Amph.*, i. 3, 45. *Abi præ, Sosia; jam ego sequor.*—Terence, *Eun.*, v. 2, 69. *I præ: sequor.*

² We find in Plautus *præsente testibus*, and in Terence *præsente*

The oldest prepositions have a tendency to rid themselves of their meaning in order to become mere grammatical instruments. In English the particle *to* is often made to precede the infinitive, simply to show that it is an infinitive.

It is the presence of these words, apparently empty of meaning, which has made the creation of Language appear a superhuman achievement.

Something of the same kind happened to the conjunctions. If we consider a word as devoid of meaning as is the French conjunction *que*, it is difficult to conceive how the mind could first create so abstract a sign, and then cause it to be accepted. But the further we go back the easier we find the explanation. The conjunction *que* resumes its place among the pronouns. The subjunctive which it now appears to govern preceded it. By an illusion similar to that which we have just noted in the case of prepositions, the mind creates between the two words a relation of cause to effect; a relation which has become actual, since in the matter of languages the errors of the people gradually become truths.

The history of the Latin conjunctions *ut*, *ne*, *quominus*, *quin*, etc., shows us a like set of facts. These words originally possessed a full signification, but the signification was gradually lost in the movement of the phrase, to which thenceforward they served as a mere hinge.

The pronominal origin of such ancient conjunctions

nobis. These may be called prepositional formations which have been arrested half-way.

as *ós*, *ut*, fits them to assume successively a signification either of time or cause. But the same fact may be observed in conjunctions derived from substantives. We will take an example from German.

The German word *weil*, "because," is an ancient substantive dragged into the class of conjunctions. The form used to be *die wile*, *die weile*, "as long as." Luther uses it in this way, and Goethe too, who loved the language of the people, often employed it. But the word was transferred from the conception of time to the conception of cause, as happened also with the Latin *quoniam*. At the present day *weil* gives the impression of an abstract word indicating the motive of an action.

Since these three parts of speech—adverb, preposition and conjunction—have not always existed, but have been formed by slow elaboration, at a comparatively recent period, it is not rash to imagine a similar process at a more ancient epoch for substantives, adjectives and verbs. Not that the idea of an object, of a quality, of an action, awaited the birth of the Indo-European languages; no language exists without words to represent objects of nature, such as *man*, *stone*, *mountain*, or qualities of objects, such as *large*, *small*, *high*, *low*, *far*, *near*, or the most obvious actions, such as to *walk*, *run*, *eat*, *drink*, *speak*. But that is not what we call the class of substantive, adjective and verb. The class of substantives includes nouns representing mere conceptions of the mind; these nouns are treated in identically the same way as the others. The class of adjectives includes

words which do not correspond to any quality, as when the Greeks said, *τριταῖος ἦλθεν*, "he came the third day," or the Latins, *nocturnus obambulat*. The class of verbs presupposes a system of persons, tenses and moods. Taken thus, these parts of speech are not contemporaneous with the first awakening of intelligence. They have been formed by slow degrees, like the adverb and preposition, although too remotely to enable us to trace their evolution.

The species of word which must first have been distinguished from all the others is, in my opinion, the pronoun. I believe this to be more primitive than the substantive, because it demands less invention, and because it is more instinctive, more easily explained by gesture. We must not therefore allow ourselves to be led astray by the appellation "pronoun" (*pro nomine*), which we derive from the Latins, who in their turn translated the Greek *ἀντωνυμία*. The error has survived till our own day.¹ In my opinion pronouns are, on the contrary, the most ancient portion of Language. How could the *me* have ever existed without a designation by which to express itself?

From another point of view pronouns constitute the most versatile part of Language, since they are never definitely attached to one entity but are perpetually travelling. There are as many *I*'s as individuals who

¹ Even Reisig says that pronouns are an invention of convenience (*eine Erfindung der Bequemlichkeit*) for replacing either a substantive or an adjective.

speak. There are as many *thou's* as individuals to be addressed. There are as many *he's* and *it's* as there are real or imaginary objects in the world. This versatility arises from the fact that they do not contain any descriptive element. So that a language composed entirely of pronouns would resemble the random cries of a child, or the gesticulations of a deaf-mute. The need of another element, out of which arose the substantive, adjective and verb, was therefore evident. But it is no less true that the pronoun takes its place at the base and origin of languages; it was no doubt through the pronoun, which opposed itself to other kinds of words, that the distinction was first made between the parts of speech.

CHAPTER XX

TRANSITIVE FORCE

Whence arises our idea of a Transitive Force resident in certain words—Verbs which change their meaning in becoming transitive—Transitive Force is that which gives unity and cohesion to a phrase—The ancient grammatical mechanism is despoiled of its original value.

AS the stones of a building, having been long and accurately joined together, end by forming one single whole, so certain words which are approximate in meaning, adhere to and support each other. We are accustomed to see them thus bracketed together, and by dint of an illusion, of which the study of Language produces other examples, we imagine some hidden force which holds them together, and keeps them in due subordination. Thus there arises in our minds the idea of a "Transitive Force" resident in certain kinds of words.

We are all aware of the difference between the verbs known as neuter and the verbs known as transitive : the first are self-sufficing, and express an action which in itself constitutes a complete meaning (such as to run,

to walk, to sleep); while the others require to be followed by what has been called a *complement*. The question has been raised: which of these two sets of verbs is the more ancient? In my own mind, the answer admits of no hesitation: not only are the neuter verbs the more ancient, but there must have been a period in which only neuter verbs existed. I believe, in fact, that words were created to possess a full signification of their own, and not to serve a Syntax which was not yet in existence.

Some of these verbs were frequently associated with words which determined their bearing, and directed their action on to a particular object; the mind therefore became accustomed to the companionship, and even expected what seemed to it an obligatory addition, a necessary direction. By a transfer of ideas, analogous examples of which are to be found outside philology, our intelligence believed that it felt in the very words themselves that which is merely the result of our habit of thought: from that moment arose verbs which *demand*ed to be followed by a complement. The transitive verb was born.¹

A double consequence has resulted from this fact:—
(1) The meaning of the verb has been modified: (2) the significative value of case-inflections has been lessened.

¹ It has been agreed to reserve the name of transitive verbs for those verbs alone which are constructed with the accusative. In a large sense, one might also call transitive those verbs which, like *μνησχω*, *χρησθαι*, are constructed with the genitive or dative. It is not the choice of any particular case that is of importance; but the close connection which has been established by the mind, to such a degree that the verb would seem incomplete without its accompaniment.

We will first give a few examples of words having changed their meaning.

The root *pat* expresses a rapid movement like that of a body which falls or of a bird which flies. It furnished in Greek πλττω, "to fall," πέτομαι and ἵπταμαι, "to fly." In Latin, it supplied *petulans*, *impetus*, *acipiter*, *præpes*, *propitius*. But, having become transitive, the verb *petere* denoted the impulse towards some goal (*petere loca calidiora*, *petere solem*), until at last it signified any kind of search: *petere consulatum*, *honores*. Hence *petitio*, *appetitus*.

This succession of meanings is so natural that we find it again in other languages.

The Greek ἱκνέομαι, nearly related to ἤκω and to ἱκάνω, means "to go." But, constructed with the accusative, it assumes the meaning of "to pray." It is enough to quote these words of Æschylus (*Persæ*, 216):

Θεοὺς δὲ προστροπαῖς ἱκνουμένη . . .
Imploring the gods with sacrifices . . .

It has supplied, in this acceptation, the derivative ἱκέτης, "suppliant," whence ἱκετεύω, "to implore."

In Sanscrit, the verb *jā*, the ordinary meaning of which is "to go," acquires the meaning of "to pray," if it is followed by an accusative. The Vedic *tat tvā jāmi* (literally "*te hoc adeo*") is interpreted by *tat tvā jācē*, "I ask you this."

We will now turn to an association of ideas which is the counterpart of the preceding one.

The verbs which signify "to retire," assume, when

they become transitive, the meaning of "to cede, to abandon."

Cedo means properly "to retire": this is the meaning which it has preserved in *recedo*, *discedo*, *decedo*. *Cedere alicui* therefore meant "to retire in favour of some one, to yield one's place." The idea of yielding one's place having later become the symbol of all kinds of concession, *cedo* assumed the meaning of "to yield." Then by a fresh advance, it came to be constructed with the accusative, and signified "to cede, to grant." *Cedere multa multis de jure suo*.—*Cedere possessionem*.—*Cedere victoriam*.¹

The same succession of meanings is to be found in Greek. *Εἴκω* means to retire. *Εἴκειν θυράων, κλισμοῦ, πολέμου*, "to retire through the door, from a throne, from the war." The Scholiasts rendered it by *ὑποχωρέω*, *παραχωρέω*.

Later the Greeks said: *εἴκειν ὀργῇ, θυμῷ, ἀνάγκῃ*, "to yield to anger, to passion, to necessity."

But *εἴκω*, being constructed with the accusative, assumed the further signification of "to leave, to abandon." Nestor, giving advice to his son about a chariot race, tells him that in turning the goal he is to excite the off horse by his cries, and to give it the reins:

τόν δεξιδν ἵππον
κένσαι ὁμοκλήσας, εἴξαι τέ οἱ ἥνία χερσίν.

This succession of ideas is so natural that one may

¹ Inversely, *obstare* has in French attained to the meaning of *enlever*, "to take away." The original form of usage was: "*Ôter la retraite à quelqu'un, lui ôter les moyens de vivre*."

expect to find it again in other languages. The Germans, for example, for "to retire from an affair," say *von einem Geschäft abtreten*. The verb is, in this case, neuter, and possesses its original signification. But they also say, making this same verb transitive: *Jemanden einen Acker, ein Recht, ein Land abtreten*, "to cede to some one a field, a right, a territory."¹ In English the verb *forego* or *forgo* means in a like manner "to retire from" and "to cede."

It is a long way from "to stand upright" to "to comprehend, to know." Yet this is the change which has come about for the root *sta*, not once, but in at least three cases.

We have the Greek *ἵστημι*, which, in combination with *ἐπι*, gives *ἐπίσταμαι*, "to know," whence *ἐπιστήμη*, "cleverness, science."

We have, on the other hand, the German *stehen*, which produced *verstehen*, "to understand," whence *Verstand*, "intelligence." Already in Middle High-German *verstân*, and in Old High-German *firstân*, signified "to comprehend."

Finally, in English we have *stand*, whence *understand*, which was preceded by the Anglo-Saxon *forstandan* (with same meaning).

¹ Jacob Grimm, in his Dictionary, has inverted the order of things. He considers the transitive sense as the more ancient of the two. He translates by *deculcare*, and gives as first example:—*den Absatz vom Schuh, den Schuh vom Fusz abtreten*. In the expression: *ein Land abtreten*, "to cede a territory," he discovers a figure of speech: *mit dem Fusze von sich abtreten*. The metaphor would at the least be a strange one.

Fully to realise this change, we must remember that the first arts were not taught by books: they were practical arts, in which the first necessity was to learn the proper attitude and position. Such was the art of hurling the javelin, of wielding the club, or again the art of striking fire from the flint, or of horse-taming. On the other hand, we must take into consideration the fact that *ἐπίσταμαι* is a verb of middle form, that is to say, a reflexive verb: it means literally "to hold oneself." *Verstehen* in German is still often a reflexive verb. It is quite usual to say: *sich auf etwas verstehen*; *er versteht sich auf Astronomie, auf Literatur, auf Politik*. We see henceforward how a verb which signifies "to hold oneself" can acquire the meaning of "to know": *er versteht sich auf das Speerwerfen, auf das Pferdebändigen*.

Homer (*Il.*, xv. 282) employs the participle *ἐπιστάμενος* with the dative:

Τοῖσι δ' ἔπειτ' ἀγόρευε Θόας, Ἀνδράϊμονος υἱός,
 Αἰτωλῶν ὅχ' ἄριστος, ἐπιστάμενος μὲν ἕκοντι,
 Ἑσθλὸς δ' ἐν σταδίῳ.

*Iis autem contionatus est Thoas, Andraemonis filius,
 Aetolorum longe præstantissimus, peritus quidem jaculi,
 Strenuus etiam in stataria.*

The commentators choose to imagine an implied word *μάρνασθαι*. But this is unnecessary; it could be translated into German without ellipse: *sich auf den Wurfspiess verstehend*.

There was thenceforward but one step to saying, as we find already in Homer: *ἄνῃρ φόρμιγγος ἐπιστάμενος*

καὶ δοιδῆς, or again ἐπιστάμενοι πολέμοιο. Finally, we already have ἐπίσταμαι with the accusative: πολλά δ' ἐπίστατο ἔργα.

The history of the two Germanic verbs is just the same. The German says, using the accusative: *Verstehst du mich?*—*Keiner hat die Sache verstanden.* And in English: *Do you understand me?*—*Who has understood the apologue?*

These three examples show in the clearest manner that Transitive Force does not limit itself to the establishment of a link between the verb and the complement: it transforms the meaning of the verb.

There is a historical conclusion to be drawn from these facts.

When we survey the lists of "roots" drawn up by the Hindoo grammarians and adopted, subject to rectification, by modern science, we note that most of them already possess a transitive meaning. This would prove, were proof needed, the antiquity of Syntax. But we should risk a wide deviation from the truth, were we to believe that the meaning attributed to these roots is the original and initial meaning. Many, assuming a transitive value, must have changed their acceptation. The examples which we have just given abundantly prove this. Those who believed that the root *man* meant from the first "to think," or the root *budh*, "to know," would make the same mistake as if "to ask, to pray" were set down in a Latin historical dictionary as the original meaning of *petere*.

We pass now to the second consequence, the deteriorating of the significative value of the case-inflections.

It is interesting to note how Transitive Force gradually enters into conflict with the original value of the cases, or—to speak without metaphor—how the force of habit results in a certain case being in course of time considered as pre-eminently the complementary case. The Latins first said with the accusative: *petimus urbem*, because the accusative marks the goal towards which motion is directed. But helped by Analogy, they also said: *linquimus urbem*, *fugimus urbem*, so that the accusative, from being a local case, became a grammatical case. Nothing could be more destructive to the original value of the inflections.

Sequor means literally, "I attach myself": it corresponds to the Greek *ἑπομαι*, which takes the dative. Yet the Latins said: *Sequi feras*, *sequi virtutem*. *Meditor* means "I exert myself": it corresponds to the Greek *μελετῶμαι*, of which it is a more or less exact copy. Yet they said: *meditari versus*, *meditari artem citharædicam*.¹

When once the type of transitive verb had been adopted, it multiplied rapidly. Verbs like *dolere*, *flere*, *tremere*, which by nature would seem as if they ought to remain without complement, were commonly declined with the accusative: *Tuam vicem doleo*.—*Flebunt Ger-*

¹ *Meditor*, *meditatio* are terms of school or gymnasium come from Greece to Italy: they represent the Greek *μελετᾶν*, *μελέτη*, *μελέτημα*. A military exercise was called *meditatio campestris*; an oratorical exercise, *meditatio rhetorica*. Virgil uses the word as a neuter verb and in its proper sense, when he says: *meditantem in prœlia taurum*.

manicum etiam ignoti.—*Te Stygii tremuere lacus.* Thus the spirit of imitation can go far. *Amo* having become a transitive verb, *ardeo*, *pereo*, *depereo*, *demorior* also became transitive. We find in the comic poets: *Is amore illam deperit.*

All ancient languages did not in this respect arrive at the same point. Greek preserved for a longer time than Latin a sense of the value of the cases. Thus a certain number of Greek verbs take the genitive.

It is on account of the partitive idea expressed by the genitive that we find it used with verbs signifying "to eat, to drink." It is the same in French: they say, "*boire du vin*," and not "*boire le vin*." Πίνειν οἶνον, ὕδατος, γάλακτος is the usual construction. For a like reason, the genitive is used with verbs signifying "to taste, to touch, to take, to obtain."¹ When Thetis, imploring Zeus, touches his chin, the poet says: καὶ ἔλλαβε χεὶρὶ γενείου. Again for the same reason, the genitive is employed with verbs signifying "to desire," such as ἔσθαι, ὀρέγεσθαι, ἐπιθυμεῖν.² Hector is seized with a desire to embrace his child:

Ὡς εἰπὼν οὗ παιδὸς ὀρέξατο φαίδιμος Ἑκτωρ.

The verbs which express the activity of organs, such as "to hear, see, know, remember," complete this series. There is, in fact, a difference between the effective and

¹ Θιγγάνειν, ψάβειν, τυγχάνειν.

² This is what has been misunderstood by many excellent grammarians, who have preferred to assume an ellipse. Thus Kühner (§ 415) explains ἐπιθυμῶ τῆς σοφίας by ἐπιθυμῶ ἐπιθυμίαν τῆς σοφίας.

direct possession, expressed by the accusative, and the more or less superficial attack, expressed by the genitive, which is suitable to these verbs of intellectual signification. Latin has preserved one single specimen of this kind, *memini*, which takes the genitive, as if to prove that this construction was not always alien to the languages of Italy. But *memini* itself is joined to a complement in the accusative: *Suam quisque homo rem meminit*, says Plautus. And Virgil: *Numeros memini, si verba tenerem*.

Latin, while levelling its syntax, preserved the memory of a condition at once more ancient and more akin to Greek. The verbs signifying "to desire, to like," ended by treading the usual path, that is to say, they are followed by the accusative; but the adjectives or participles derived from these verbs remained faithful to the ancient construction. *Cupidus famæ, amans laudis*, were still used with the genitive, although *cupere, amare* had long ceased to be employed in this way.

In like manner the construction with the genitive is preserved in Sanscrit. It is even continued in some cases in modern German: *Iss des Brodes. Geniesse dieser Freude. Wir pflegen der Ruhe*.

The ancient grammatical mechanism, then, has not been abolished: but it has been despoiled of its original value for the benefit of a new order. The phrase, in this new period of Language, is composed of words which are, on the one hand, governing, on the other hand, governed. Syntax confiscates for its own profit the individual meaning of inflections. This, to borrow from Germanic

mythology, might be called "the twilight of inflections."

Must we regard this adaptation to new usages as decadence or as progress? The question may seem an idle one, since every epoch forms for itself the language which it needs. But if an answer must be made I would say that we should consider it as an advance. If it be in the nature of all arts to transform themselves, how should the most necessary of them all, which is made to accompany thought in its every step, have failed to transform the material left to it by the childhood of humanity? The advance is obvious to all eyes. The words which were, so to speak, shut up in themselves, are gradually linked with the other words of the phrase. And the phrase itself, though composed of small pieces which are immovable and related, appears now a work of art possessing its centre, its lateral parts, and its dependencies, now an army on the march, with all its subdivisions in connection with and in support of one another.

CHAPTER XXI

CONTAGION

Examples of Contagion—Negative words in French—The English *but*—The active past participle—The Latin conjunction *si*.

I HAVE already proposed to call by the name of *Contagion* a phenomenon which makes its appearance fairly often, and which has the effect of communicating to a word the meaning of its surroundings. It is obvious that this Contagion is nothing but a special form of the association of ideas.

French supplies an example, which is well-known, but so much to the point that I feel bound to recall it.

We all know what happened in the case of the words *pas, point, rien, plus, aucun, personne, jamais*. They served to reinforce the only genuine negative, to wit *ne*. *Je n'avance pas* (*passum*).—*Je n'en vois point* (*punctum*).—*Je ne sais rien* (*rem*).—*Je n'en connais aucun* (*aliquem unum*).—*Je n'en veux plus* (*plus*).—*Il n'est personne* (*persona*) *qui l'ignore*.—*Je ne l'oublierai jamais* (*jam magis*).

These words, by their association with the word *ne*,

became themselves negatives, and to such good purpose that they can dispense with their companion. *Qui va la? Personne.—Pas d'argent, pas de Suisse.—Sans la connaissance de soi-même, point de solide vertu.—Son style est toujours ingénieux, jamais recherché.*

In Semantics it is of interest to consult alternately, on the subject of these words, a modern and an historical dictionary. This comparison is like taking the soundings of the mind. The two answers obtained are contradictory, but, on reflection, though mutually opposed, are both of them reasonable and legitimate.

The French Academy, in its dictionary of usages, places the negative sense before all the others.

"'Aucun,'" says the edition of 1878, "*adj. Nul, pas un.—'Rien.' Néant, nulle chose.*"

For which the Academy must not be blamed. It was part of its plan to explain words according to the impression which they make to-day. It was, moreover, the same impression which they made in the seventeenth century:

... "*Laissez faire, ils ne sont pas au bout,
J'y vendrai ma chemise, et je veux rien ou tout.*"

Racine (*Plaideurs*).

And even in the eighteenth:

"*Car de rien fait-il tout saillir,
Lui qui a rien ne peut faiblir.*"

Let us now turn to Littré:

"'Aucun,' *quelqu'un.*—'Rien,' *quelque chose.*"

We see what a distance lies between the original meaning and the meaning produced by the long sojourn

in negative phrases. It must indeed be added, that it is not only through negative, but also through interrogative phrases, that the change came about: *De tous ceux qui se disaient mes amis, aucun m'a-t-il secouru?—Auriez-vous jamais cru?—Avons-nous rien négligé?* There are cases in which the meaning remains half way between the two acceptations: *Il m'est défendu de rien dire.—Je doute qu'aucun homme d'honneur y consente.*

It is not therefore direct contact nor the actual neighbourhood of the negation which is the cause of the change. The contagious action has been produced by the general meaning of the phrase.

Something of the same kind exists in English.

The English *but*, which comes from the Anglo-Saxon *būtan* (= *be-utan*), means properly "outside."¹ When it means "only," it stands for *ne but*. The negation was finally suppressed. "*We have here but five loaves and two fishes*" (Matt. xiv. 17). Such is the text of the Authorised Version. But the Anglo-Saxon Gospel says: "*We nabbad (ne habbad) her buton fif hlafas und twegen fiscas.*" In the course of time the negation became superfluous, the particle *but* having taken the meaning upon itself.

Contagion supplies, I think, the true explanation of a fact connected with the French language which has greatly occupied grammarians—the change from past

¹ Dutch *buiten*. Hence, in opposition to *Binnenzee*, "the inner sea," *Buitenzee*, "the outer sea."—Storm, *Philologie Anglaise*, p. 8.

participle passive into participle active. In these phrases: "*J'ai reçu de mauvaises nouvelles, j'ai pris la route la plus directe,*" *reçu, pris*, have to-day the active sense which they owe to the proximity of the verb *avoir*. The proof that they possess this active sense is that in telegraphic language I should say: "*Reçu de mauvaises nouvelles.—Pris la ligne directe.*"

Herein lies, if I mistake not, the reason for that rule of non-agreement which has been so doubtfully and so variously explained. The truth is that the participle has, by Contagion, become active. It has incorporated itself with its auxiliary. But as time has been necessary for the operation of this change, as the ancient turns of phrase were long in dying, and as the slightest derogation from the ordinary course provides them with a pretext for continuing to exist, the change in question has only been accomplished in the case of the construction most frequently in use, that which we are accustomed to regard as the normal construction. Everywhere else Language is faithful to the ancient grammar.

I will give one more example of the force of Contagion.

Whence comes the conditional idea which is suggested in French, as in Latin, by the conjunction *si*? To explain this we must go back many centuries.

The Latin particle *si* was primitively an adverb signifying "in this way, in this manner." The conditional idea came to it by the proximity of the subjunctive or of the optative. The old formula of the invocations

and prayers: *Si hæc, Dii, faxitis*, derives its hypothetical signification from the verb.¹ The meaning was at first the same as though it had been: *Sic, Dii, hæc faxitis*.² The second proposition comes later to enunciate a second fact, the consequence of the first: *Ædem vobis constituam*. The mind grasped a link between these two propositions, and as on both sides the action is presented as contingent, it very naturally introduced into the first word the idea of a supposition or condition.

Already in the afore-mentioned formula, when employed by contemporaries of Æmilius Paullus, *si* was a conjunction. To such a degree had it become one, so markedly had it assumed the conditional idea, that it could be followed by an indicative. *Si id facis, hodie postremum me vides*.³

Conjunctions of the same kind in other languages have an analogous origin. When looked at closely, these little words are nothing but pronominal adverbs, in which there is nothing to announce a supposition or condition.

¹ In more modern language, *si hæc, Dii, feceritis*.

² The adverb *sic* is nothing but *si* accompanied by the enclitic which we find in *nunc, tunc*.

³ French went even farther. The conditional, after *si*, would seem a pleonasm.

CHAPTER XXII

ON CERTAIN GRAMMATICAL INSTRUMENTS

The relative pronoun—The article—The verb substantive—
Auxiliary verbs.

ONCE the idea of a phrase forming a whole has impressed itself on the minds of men, they feel a desire to complete it, and to give it the instruments which it needs. But since the popular intelligence, as we have seen, confines itself, without creating anything, to adapting what has been furnished by anterior centuries to new uses, a certain number of words are converted for the requirements of Syntax.

A first conversion—the most important of all—is that which has given us the relative pronoun.

A certain pronoun, in no way distinguished externally from others, acquires, by the use to which it is put, a force of union which allows it to weld together two propositions. This is expressed in grammatical language as follows: from *demonstrative* it becomes *relative* or *anaphorical*.

A somewhat advanced syntax is needed for this

conversion to take place: in the divers Indo-European languages the choice of the relative pronoun came about late and not always in the same way. To verify this, we have only to compare the Latin *qui* with the Sanscrit *jas* and the Greek *ὅς*. The Greek language in the time of Homer, and even later, in the time of Sappho and of Alcman, had not yet made its definite choice.¹ It hesitated long between the pronouns *ja*, *ta*, and *sua*.²

One naturally wonders at what epoch so necessary a means of expression began to exist. With regard to this, we must make a distinction between the *idea* of the relative, and the final adoption of any particular pronoun. The idea of the relative is probably anterior to the separation of our languages, since we find everywhere a certain pattern of phrase, always the same, which presupposes the presence of a relative pronoun. Proverbs and popular adages are inclined to this turn of phrase:

Quod ætas vitium posuit, id ætas auferet. Quod aliis vitio vertis, id ne ipse admiseris. Qui pro innocente dicit, is satis est eloquens. Cui plus licet quam par est, is plus vult quam licet. Quam quisque norit artem, in hac se exerceat.

¹ In the Homeric language, *το* is the ordinary anaphorical pronoun. Ex.: Εἰ μὲν τις θεός ἐσσι, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι.—Ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν χαλκὸν τε ἔλις χρυσὸν τε δέδεξο, Δῶρα, τὰ τοι δώσουσι πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ. Etc.

² The very generally admitted identification of *ὅς* with *jas* is not certain: from the form *ὅτι* preserved in an inscription of Locris, one is led to suppose that *ὅς* corresponds to *sua*.

This type of phrase reappears in Sanscrit :¹

"Whose the mind, his the power." *Jasja buddhis, tasja balam.*

"Who loves, fears." *Jasja snehas, tasja bhajam.*

"For whom the gods prepare death, from him do they wrest the mind." *Jasmāi devās prajacchanti parābhavam, tasja buddhim apakarṣanti.*

"As is a man towards others, so must one be towards him." *Jasmin jathā vartate jas, tasmin tathā vartitarjam.*

"What thou givest, in that lies thy wealth." *Jad dadāsi, tad te vittam.*

"As do the great, so do the rest of mankind." *Jad ācarati grēṣṭhas, tad itaras ḡanas.*

The same construction is already of current use in the Vedas: "Quod sacrificium protegis, id ad deos pervenit." *Jam jaḡnam paribhūr asi, sa deve u gacchati.*—"Qui nos lacesset, procul eum amovete." *Jō nah prī-tanjād, apa tam dhatam.*²

We shall be asked the reason why the relative proposition is thus launched before the chief one. I believe that we have here a semantic fact of which examples are to be found in other families of languages. By the action of the mind an interrogation must be established, with the result that the two propositions

¹ See Boehtlingk, *Indische Sprüche*. By not referring to Indian-ists, we have simplified the quotations and suppressed the effects of *sandhi*.

² The type of these constructions has been preserved in our proverbs: *Qui aime bien, chātie bien. Spare the rod, spoil the child. Whom the gods love, die young.* Etc.

form the question and answer. This is probably the reason why a large proportion of the Indo-European languages make the one pronoun fulfil both the interrogative and relative functions.

To appreciate to its full extent the importance of the relative pronoun, we must remember to how many derivatives it gives birth: first, words like *qualis*, *quantus*, *quot*; then the conjunctions, *quod*, *quia*, *quum*, *quoniam*. In Greek: ὅς, ὅτε, ὅ, ὅν, ὅθεν, ἥνίκα, ὅτι, also derivatives like ὅσος, ὅλος. In Sanscrit, derivatives such as *jādr̥ṣa*, *jāvant*, to which must be joined the most important conjunctions, *jad*, *jadi*, *jatra*, *jadā*, *jathā*.¹ The creation of a relative pronoun is therefore one of the capital events of the history of Language; without a word of this kind, every idea possessed of any force, of any completeness, was impossible. But this creation was obtained by the slow conversion of one of those numerous pronouns which served to accompany a gesture in space. So we here find the human mind patiently forging the instrument of which it is in need.

The same can be said of the little word which the Greeks, comparing it with the articulations of the body, called ἄρθρον, and which we call the *article*.

We know that the article is an ancient demonstrative

¹ For additional detail, see, in the *Studien* of Curtius, the articles of Windisch in vol. ii. and of Jolly in vol. vi. See also Delbrück, *Grundriss*, § 222, s. and the thesis of Ch. Baron, *Le pronom relatif et la conjonction en grec. Essai de syntaxe historique*. Paris, Picard, 1891.

pronoun. But the signification of this demonstrative pronoun has been to a certain degree converted. It has been confiscated for the benefit of the syntax.

We can take as example the French article *le*, which represents the Latin *ille*. This last served to designate objects or persons: *Magnus ille Alexander!—Ita ille faxit Jupiter!* But in course of time the demonstrative sign became a mere grammatical indication: "*La personne dont je t'ai parlé hier.—Les pays que nous avons traversés.*" Here the article only figures as the antecedent of the relative pronoun. It has become a grammatical instrument.¹

The usefulness of the article can be felt more than explained. Latin, from being deprived of it, is often weighed down and hampered in its course. Greek, on the contrary, which early felt its need, owes to it in part its suppleness. The conformity of the French language to the Greek, noted by Henri Estienne, arises in some degree from this. I need only recall these turns of expression: οἱ πάλαι σοφοὶ . . . ἐν τῷ μεταξύ χρόνῳ . . . τῶν νῦν οἱ τότε διέφερον. . . . Or these: ὀρεγόμενοι τοῦ πρώτος ἕκαστος γίγνεσθαι, etc.

It has happened indeed that the article has finally been inserted where it brought no appreciable help. It might be said that the languages in which it is of the greatest use are those which remain free to employ or to

¹ Definitions of the grammarians: "An article is a word placed before a substantive to indicate whether it is masculine or feminine."—"An article is a word placed before a noun, to show whether this noun is used in a particular or in a general sense." Etc.

omit in accordance with the meaning. There is no doubt that French, within the last two centuries, has extended its use beyond due limits, so that it has become less useful in proportion as it became more indispensable.

We must also make mention of the verb *to be*, which was declared by the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages to be a mere "copula"; a fact which shows the impression now made on the mind by this verb, after reaching the climax of its evolution. Yet it undoubtedly began by some concrete signification: others have followed in the path, such as *fuo, exsto, evado*. If they have not attained to the same degree of colourlessness, this is attributable to a difference of age, not of nature.

Something of the same kind took place in the case of the verb *to have*. When I say, "This man has lost all that he had," I employ twice over the same verb *to have*; and this without objections from any one, to such a degree has the auxiliary verb been converted by change of use into a word of a distinct species.

Thus Language deducts from the hereditary stock a certain number of expressions of which it makes grammatical instruments. One who has only known them in this last capacity, has difficulty in imagining that there was a time when these words had their proper signification. An author of the eighteenth century draws attention to the fact that in this expression: *Il a été ordonné* . . . "it has been decreed," three words out

of the four serve simply for the construction of the sentence. The number of these words increases slowly with the lapse of centuries, since, on the one hand, Specialisation of Function¹ tends to create new ones, while, on the other hand, Transitive Force mixes them more and more, as a necessary element, with the structure of the phrase. This is the reason why etymology, when confronted by a modern language, and deprived of earlier documents to enlighten and to guide it, goes so hopelessly astray.

¹ See above, p. II.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ORDER OF WORDS

Why strictness of construction is in inverse proportion to richness of grammar—Whence comes the Order of French construction—Advantages of a fixed Order—Comparison with the modern languages of India.

AMONG the different methods of expression of which our languages make use, the Order of words, that is to say, a certain fixity in the construction of the phrase—a fixity which of itself often determines the meaning of vocables—is the method which was thought of last. It is because this method is in fact a shade less material than the others. In this phrase, "The Japanese have vanquished the Chinese," the position alone indicates which is the object and which the complement; change the Order, while keeping the words, and the contrary assertion is the result. This may be compared with the Arabic system of numeration, in which each number, in addition to its proper value, has a value of position.¹

This circumstance alone might teach us that we are

¹ Jespersen, *Progress in Language*, p. 80.

in the presence of the work of centuries. As a matter of fact the ancient languages, so superior from other points of view, show nothing at all approaching to it.

Here a question occurs to us which often presents itself in the history of languages and of human affairs in general. Is it the loss of inflections that has resulted, by way of compensation and makeshift, in the growing strictness of construction, or is it rather that a more regular construction has rendered the inflections useless? The answer is one which is generally the right solution for dilemmas of this kind: *both*. In proportion as these inflections disintegrated, the necessity of a fixed Order made itself additionally felt; and, on the other hand, the habit of this fixed Order completed the downfall of the inflections. It may be imagined that official documents, such as charts, diplomas, public or private acts, contracts of all kinds, in which it was most important to avoid all possibility of misunderstanding, were the first to introduce the habit of a uniform construction as they were also the most persevering (and this implies no contradiction) in their attempts to retain the inflections. The two methods, employed simultaneously, were bound to converge towards the same goal. This explains the preservation of the declension with two cases for certain names of relationship, such as *fil*s and *fil*, *enfes* and *enfant*, or certain titles such as *cuens* and *conte*, *ber* and *baron*, and for certain proper names such as *Jacques* and *Jacque*, *Hugues* and *Hugon*. While these differences of inflection were omitted at last, the Order of words only gained in strength.

The question of the Order of words is never raised but another follows in its wake: is it an advantage or a drawback to have a fixed and invariable construction? It has been the fashion to praise the freedom of Latin and Greek, which allow the word towards which attention is to be drawn and light directed, to be pushed to the front or reserved till the end of the sentence. But, to be just, it must be recognised that those languages which are the most bound to a certain Order are not for that reason absolutely fettered. Perhaps even inversion produces the greater effect for having more completely broken through the ordinary custom.

It is in any case certain that a predetermined Order is a relief, if not for the writer or the speaker, at all events for him who reads or listens. If we read an ode of Horace, in which the adjective is often far away from its substantive, or a speech of Cicero, in which the crucial word only comes at the end of a whole long period, we feel that in French things are made easier for us. It is probable that the manner of declamation contributed towards the understanding of the phrase; perhaps even, in the public market-place, those words announced from afar, so long awaited, were the only ones which reached the ears of the audience. On the other hand, the tendency of all literatures is to exaggerate, to extend beyond due limits, to push to an extreme the resources of expression which are supplied to them by the ordinary language of daily life: it may therefore be imagined that the ingeniously distorted construction of the Greek and Latin lyrics is up to a certain point a trick of style. The

speech of ordinary conversation, such as we find it in the comic poets and in familiar letters, is not nearly so tortuous.

Since the Order of words becomes stricter in proportion as the grammatical resources diminish, every disturbance of the construction involved the risk of changing the meaning. We are acquainted with those secret locks, the mechanism of which only works when the different parts are disposed according to a preconcerted arrangement. Our modern languages are in a like case. Modify the Order: either the meaning will be modified also, or we shall cease to understand.

It is especially in ready-made expressions, which sometimes preserve the signs of a more ancient grammar, that this Order must be maintained: a delicate test and touchstone by which the foreigner of imperfect education is revealed.

The expression, "Logical Order," has been used with reference to the French phrase. There is here a certain exaggeration. It is the moment to recall the remark of an English writer, that it is with this as with the antipodes: every nation is tempted to think that it alone places its words in their true position. One can easily, without being wanting in logic, conceive a different Order. In the primitive plan of our languages, the verb was followed by its subject (*δίδωμι, δίδωσι*). Without leaving the French language, we find propositions which place the subject at the end.¹

¹ "*Les arbres qu'avait abattus le vent.*" "*L'homme de qui dépendait notre sort.*" Etc.

Rivarol especially, in his *Discours* on the universality of the French language, allowed himself to be led into eulogies, which are at once vague and excessive: "French, by a unique privilege, has alone remained faithful to the direct order, as though formed wholly of reason. . . . In vain do passions overthrow and strive to seduce us into following the order of sensations; the French syntax is incorruptible. From this arises that admirable lucidity, eternal basis of our language. When the French language translates an author, it in reality explains him. . . ."

It is not the French language *in abstracto* which ought to have been praised, but the persevering effort of its writers during the last three centuries, to render the liberties of its syntax proportionate to the resources of expression of which the language has command. In this they have displayed a singular honesty. They understood that, in writing, clearness was one of the forms of probity. Those who, under pretence of progress, or in imitation of foreign literatures, desire at the present day to free themselves from these ancient rules, should first give to their language the means of doing without them.

This is the place to recall the hypothesis propounded on the subject of monosyllabic languages like Chinese, in which the rules of construction alone constitute almost the entire grammar. It has been conjectured that monosyllabism represented not a primitive condition, but, on the contrary, the old age of a language, in which everything

was worn out and laid bare. It is possible, indeed, that it might prove necessary to reverse in this way the series of linguistic periods. It would then have to be supposed that our languages, in abandoning more and more their grammatical mechanism, were doomed to arrive some day at a more or less similar condition. It is true that literary tradition would, in case of need, be a safeguard for them, a safeguard which was lacking to the Middle Kingdom, since Chinese writing preserves the thought without transmitting the language.

It will not be without use to add here, by way of counterpart, the fate which has befallen the idioms derived from Sanscrit. To the ancient cases of the Sanscrit declension there were joined words which had the same meaning as our prepositions, *ἐν*, *πρός*, *παρά*, *ἐπί*, etc., but which, in mingling with the preceding substantive, soon produced the impression of case-inflections. From this resulted declensions of a wholly new aspect. It is in this way that we find locatives ending in *majjhe*, *majjhi*, *mahi*, *mai*, which represents for us the Sanscrit word *madhyē*, "in the middle." Another locative ends in *thāni*, *thāi*: this must be regarded as the Sanscrit substantive *sthānē*, coming from *sthānam*, "the place." A third locative ends in *pāsē*, *pāsi*: this is the Sanscrit *pārṣvē*, "at the side."

The dative is in a like manner represented by inflections of great variety. It may be by *kāchē*, *kahi*, *khē*, which is the Sanscrit word *kakṣē*, "at the side." It may be also by *līdhē*, *lajē*, *laē*, *lāi*, *lē*, which is the Sanscrit *labdhē*, "for the good of." It may be by *āthim*, which is

the Sanscrit *arthē*, "in the interest of." It may be by *kāgi*, which is the Sanscrit *kārjē*, "for the benefit of." It may be by *bātī*, *vātī*, which is the Sanscrit *vārtlē*, "in favour of."¹

Here then we are confronted with the spectacle of a language which, instead of attaining to simplicity, like the Romance languages, by acquiring distinct exponents, has only succeeded in creating fresh confusion.

¹ Hoernle, *A Comparative Grammar of the Gaudian Languages*. London, Trübner, 1880, p. 224, s.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE LOGIC OF LANGUAGE

The nature of the Logic of Language—How the popular mind proceeds.

LANGUAGE possesses its Logic. But it is a special Logic, in some sort professional, which is not to be confounded with the science usually called by this name. Logic properly so called forbids, for instance, the union in one judgment of contradictory terms, such as saying of a square that it is long. Now, Language has no manner of objection to this: it even allows us to say, if we wish, that a circle is square. But, on the other hand, it makes certain prohibitions which are a matter of indifference to logic; it forbids, for example, a verb in the singular to be joined with a plural subject, or an adjective to be in a different gender to its substantive. These are technical rules, at the same time both narrower and wider than the rules of the art of thinking.

There have often been attempts to find a sort of logical framework behind the rules of grammar, but Language is too rich and not sufficiently rectilinear to lend itself

to this presentment. It overflows the bounds of logic on every side. Moreover, its categories do not coincide with those of reasoning : having a method of procedure peculiar to itself, it at times constitutes grammatical groups which are not reducible to any abstract conception.

Those who seek for the fundamental notion expressed by the subjunctive, and who expect to find this fundamental notion by comparing all the usages of the subjunctive, and so eliciting their common element, are, I do not hesitate to say, on a wrong track. They can only attain to an extremely vague and general idea, such as the people at large would find hard to conceive, and such as we have no reason to attribute to primitive ages. Yet it is the method habitually pursued by those who propose to explain to us the essential idea of a mode, case, conjunction, preposition.

Popular Logic does not proceed in this way. It advances, so to speak, by stages. Starting from a very circumscribed and definite point, it pushes straight ahead, and arrives, in all ignorance, at a stage at which by the nature of things—I mean by the general tenour of the speech—a change is produced. Thenceforward there exists a halting-place from which there can be a fresh advance at a different angle, without any interruption of the original direction. This already furnishes two meanings. Then the same things recur in a third stage, which supplies a third orientation. And so on. In all this procedure there is no generalisation, but a march

in a broken line, in which every stopping-place, presenting the idea in a different incidence, becomes in its turn the starting-point of a new line of advance.

In order to verify this we will glance through a chapter of syntax, with apologies to our readers for the dryness of the details, and for the school memories which they cannot fail to evoke. But it is a question of rectifying a prevalent misconception, and of showing once for all, on well-defined ground, how the rules of grammar join on to one another.

We choose as examples the rules concerning the accusative, on account of their apparent complication.

What is the fundamental idea of the accusative? It will be remembered that our text-books distinguish the accusative of the direct object, that which marks duration, that which marks distance and extent, that which indicates the goal. The variety is considerable. One of our leading philologists, renouncing the hope of finding the essential idea, declares that he is tempted to apply to the accusative what the Hindoo grammarians say of the genitive: to wit, that it is admissible on all occasions when other cases cannot properly be employed. The search for the primary idea does not, however, seem to us so difficult.

If we can anywhere find the accusative employed alone, with no accompaniment, there is a chance of our being enlightened as to the original signification. Latin has, as a matter of fact, a usage in which the accusative is self-sufficient.

It is in official language, which varies at the slowest rate, and preserves its archaisms for the longest period of time, that we find this usage. The following is the beginning of the inscription on a milestone of Southern Italy:¹

"HINCE SUNT NOUCERIAM MEILIA CAPUAM XXCIII
MURANUM, LXXIII COSENTIAM CXXIII
VALENTIAM CLXXX."

The accusatives *Nouceriam*, *Capuam*, *Muranum*, *Cosentiam*, *Valentiam*, accompanied each time by a number, mark the distance from the milestone to these towns. The accusative is therefore here used as case for the goal towards which motion is directed.

This usage has been preserved in poetic language: "*Hac iter Elysium*," says the priestess of Virgil.² We find the same turn of phrase in certain expressions: *Malam crucem*, "go to the devil."

We have taken Latin as example; but the same use of the accusative exists in Sanscrit. "(Come) on the earth, O God, with all the Immortals!" *Dēva, kṣām, viṣvēbhir amṛtēbhiḥ*.

From the moment that the accusative, by itself alone, expresses direction towards a place, it is not surprising that it should have been joined to verbs signifying "to go": Language here unites two words, the association of which was fully indicated. Thus was born a first syntactical usage.

¹ *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, I, No. 551.

² *Aeneid*, vi. 542.

"*Ibitis Italiam, portusque intrare licebit*
Ad nos hinc alii sitientes Afros.
Italiam fato, profugus Laviniaque venit
*Litora."*¹

In Greek, examples are numerous :

κνίση δ' οὐρανὸν ἴκε.²

ἔβαν νέας ἀμφιελίσσας.³

πέμφομέν νιν Ἑλλάδα.⁴

Instead of designating the place, the accusative can also serve to mark a more or less abstract goal. Such is the meaning of the expression *venum ire*, "to go for sale, to be sold," *pessum ire* (for *perversum ire*), "to hurt oneself, to fall," *suppetias accurrere*, "to rush to the rescue," etc. We here find, after the rule *eo Romam*, another text-book rule : *eo lusum*, "I am going to play." *Lusum* is the accusative of a verbal substantive which has been drawn into the mechanism of the conjugation. The Latin grammarians, without understanding it, disguised it under the ludicrous name of "supine." This also is the way in which arose : *conveniunt spectatum ludos*, "they come to see the games."

We shall call this first use of the accusative *the accusative of direction*.

We have so far been confined to the first stage. The

¹ Examples are rarer among the prose-writers. Yet we find in Cicero : *Ægyptum profugisse*, . . . *Africam ire*, . . . *Rediens Campaniam*. But in general the names of countries are preceded by a preposition : perhaps we should here assume the part of copyist or editor, who could easily add an *in* or *ad* which seemed to him necessary.

² *Iliad*, i. 317.

³ *Ibid.*, iii. 162.

⁴ Euripides, *Tr.*, 883.

accusative is used in its proper sense and with its original import.

The second stage is denoted by constructions such as *invenire viam, attingere metam*. Here the point of view changes: the accusative seems to be governed by the verb. We showed in a preceding chapter by the example of *petere* and a few others, how the verbs, from being neuter, became transitive.¹ In this way another type of accusative has been gradually impressed on the minds of men: *the accusative of the direct object*. Language, with its special Logic, having said *cupere divitias*, said also *temnere divitias*; having said *sequi honores*, said also *fugere honores*. The primordial idea of the accusative was bound to be effaced in presence of this diversity: a grammatical accusative took the place of the local accusative.

We have seen further back² that this change was but slowly effected. Thus the Greek verbs which are constructed with the genitive, such as *ἀκούω, ἐπιθυμῶ, τυγχάνω*, witness to a condition of language in which the proper value of the case is still distinctly felt. It is only through the lapse of time that there is established in the minds of men a sort of levelling expressed by the rule: The active verbs require to be followed by the accusative.

A few scholars, preoccupied with the essence of things have wished to establish a special category of verbs in

¹ See p. 189. It must be added that most languages have, through an instinct of order and clearness, effected a differentiation, allotting to some the exclusive function of neuter verbs, employing others exclusively as transitives.

² See above, p. 197.

which the accusative should mark *the result* of the action, as in: *Deus creavit mundum, scribo epistolam, Themistocles extruxit muros*. But these verbs, which are distinguished from others by their meaning, do not in any way differ from them in usage; it is quite as easy to say: *Xerxes evertit muros, mandata neglexit*.

The relationship between the accusative of the direct object and the accusative of direction is no longer felt; so that there is no reason why a verb should not take both at the same time. When, in Homer, the soothsayer Helenus invites his mother Hecuba to lead the Trojan women to the sanctuary of Athene,

ξυνάγουσα γεραιὰς
Νῆδον Ἀθηναίης,

these two accusatives in no way hamper each other. It is the same when Sarpedon, accusing Paris, complains of the evils which he has caused to the Trojans:

καὶ δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ ἔοργεν
Τρῶας.

Herodotus, retailing what he had learnt about education among the Persians, said that they brought up their children to do three things only: to ride, to draw the bow, and to tell the truth. Παιδεύουσι τοὺς παῖδας (accusative of the direct object) τρία μόνον (accusative of direction), ἵππεύειν, τοξεύειν καὶ ἀληθίζεσθαι. The same construction is to be found in Latin: *Catilina juventutem multis modis mala facinora edocebat*.¹

¹ The accusative of the direct object is that one of the two which, the construction being reversed and the verb transposed into the passive, becomes the subject of the phrase.

Once in possession of this construction, Language reverses it, as a mathematician would reverse an algebraic equation : it transposes it into the passive. *Rogatus sententiam, edoctus litteras, id jubeor, διδάσκομαι τὴν μουσικὴν, κρύπτομαι τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα* : all of these are constructions which we should have difficulty in understanding were it not for the special Logic of which we have spoken.

If we wish to understand the third usage of the accusative, which is to mark duration, we must return to the original signification. Space and time being, for the Logic of Language, two quite similar things,¹ it expresses in the same way up to what epoch an action has been continued, and up to what place a movement has been prolonged ; on both hands, the accusative marks direction. Demosthenes, recalling that the power of the Thebans had lasted from the battle of Leuctra till recent times, expressed himself thus : ἵσχυσαν δέ τι καὶ Θηβαῖοι τοὺς τελευταίους τουτουσὶ χρόνους μετὰ τὴν ἐν Λεύκτροις μάχην. To convey that Mithridates was in the twenty-third year of his reign, Cicero said : *Mithridates annum jam tertium et vicesimum regnat.*

Thus was formed what grammarians call the accusative of duration : *Vejorum urbs decem æstates hiemesque continuas circumsessa . . . Flamini Diali noctem unam extra urbem manere nefas est.* We find in Lysias, to indicate that a man has been dead for three years : τέθνηκε ταῦτα

¹ This can be verified by an examination of adverbs of place, like *hic, ubi, inde*, which served equally to express ideas of place and of time.

τρία ἔτη. Latin also says no less strangely: *Puer decem annos natus*.

It sometimes happened, as was bound to be the case, that the accusative of duration was confounded with the accusative of the direct object. When the French say, *les années qu'il a vécu*, it is difficult to know exactly in what light to consider this construction. The same fact is to be met with in the ancient languages.¹ There may be a difference of opinion with regard to some of these cases, and the hesitations of French orthography are well known, but with the exception of those particular cases for which it is difficult to formulate a rule, the existence of an accusative of duration is beyond doubt: it forms the third stage of this history.

There only remain to be explained expressions such as *decem pedes latus*, or *os umerosque deo similis*. But we do not wish to prolong too technical a study; we have said enough to show how popular Logic goes to work.

This Logic, we repeat, rests entirely on Analogy, Analogy being the method of reasoning of children and of the multitude. An expression is given; they form another somewhat like it. This one in its turn produces a third, slightly different, which again provokes imita-

¹ In Sanscrit: *çatam gr̥va çaradas*, "may you live a hundred years!" In Greek: *ἔνα μῆνα μένων*, "remaining a month." *τῇ αἰρίῳ μέλλουσιν εἰ βιώσεται* (Euripides, *Alc.*, 784) "(no one knows) whether he will live to-morrow." The ancient languages appear to range these constructions under the category of the accusative of the direct object. But French is more preoccupied with the essence of things, which demands the accusative of duration.

tions, the first and the second not having in the meantime ceased to be productive. Language can go far in this way. To one who learns Language by usage this is in no way surprising, since he does not dream of bringing together or mutually comparing such different applications. But if any one, finding these applications enumerated singly in a book, tries to discover some connecting idea, some first idea common to all, he runs the risk of being lost in the most shadowy of abstractions. What we must do is to retrace the road over which Language has travelled, striving to recognise the turnings, and never forgetting that, Language being the work of the people, we must, to understand it, put off the logician and become one with the people ourselves.

CHAPTER XXV

THE SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

What we are to understand by the Subjective Element—Its connection with speech—The Subjective Element is the most ancient part of Language.

IF it be true, as has been sometimes maintained, that Language is a drama in which words figure as actors, and in which the grammatical ordering reproduces the movements of the characters, we must at least correct this comparison by the addition of a special circumstance: the impresario frequently intervenes in the action, for the purpose of contributing his reflections and his personal feeling, not after the fashion of Hamlet, who, though interrupting his comedians, remains a stranger to the piece, but as we do ourselves in a dream, when we are at the same time the interested spectator and the author of the events. This intervention is what I propose to call *the Subjective side of Language*.

This Subjective side is represented: (1) by words or paragraphs; (2) by grammatical forms; (3) by the general plan of our languages.

I take as example a miscellaneous fact of the most ordinary kind. "An accident took place yesterday on the line from Paris to Havre, which interrupted traffic for three hours, but *happily* caused no loss of life." It is clear that the word printed in italics does not refer to the accident, but that it expresses the sentiment of the narrator. We receive, however, no shock from this confusion, because it is absolutely in conformity with the nature of Language.

Many adverbs, adjectives, or sentences which we interpolate in the same manner, are reflections or appreciations of the narrator. I will cite in the first instance the expressions which mark the greater or less degree of certainty or of confidence felt by the speaker, such as *no doubt*, *perhaps*, *probably*, *assuredly*, etc. All languages possess a store of adverbs of this kind: the farther we go back into the past, the more of them do we find. Greek is fully provided with them: I need only recall the variety of particles with which the prose of Plato is sown, and which serve to qualify the impressions or the intentions of the speakers.¹ They may be compared to gestures made in passing, or to glances of intelligence cast in the direction of the audience.

A genuine *logical analysis* should, to justify its name, carefully distinguish between these two elements. If when speaking of a traveller I say, "He has at this very moment *no doubt* arrived," *no doubt* does not refer to the traveller, but to me. Logical analysis, as practised in schools, has been at times embarrassed by this Subjective

¹ "Η, μήν, τοί, ποῦ, ἴσως, δῆ, τάχα, σκέδον, ἄρα, νύν, etc.

Element: it has not realised that all writing of at all a vivid character may take the form of a dialogue with the reader. Such also is the effect produced by certain pronouns when cast into the middle of a story, in which the audience seems suddenly to be made by the narrator a party to the proceedings. La Fontaine was partial to these:

"Il vous prend sa cognée: il vous tranche la tête."

They have been called "expletives," and as a matter of fact do not form part of the narrative; nevertheless they correspond to the primary intention of the narrative.

For want of having taken this Subjective Element into consideration, certain words of the ancient languages have been misunderstood. One of the greatest of our contemporary philologists, treating of the Latin adverb *oppido*, refuses to believe that it is the ablative of an adjective signifying "solid, firm, sure."¹ He asks how this meaning can be reconciled with phrases like *oppido interii*, *oppido occidimus*. But this is because we must postulate the part of the Subjective Element. We say in the same way: *I am certainly lost*; or in German: *Ich bin sicherlich verloren*, idioms in which, were we to adhere rigidly to the text, there would be a sort of contradiction in terms.

The same thing took place also in the case of the German adverb *fast*, which now signifies "almost," but which formerly denoted an idea of fixity or of certitude. It was usual to say: *vaste ruofen*, "to call loudly," *vaste*

¹ Cf. the Greek *εμπεδος*, "solid."

zweifeln, "to doubt strongly." "I have prayed for him long and earnestly." "*Ich habe lange und fast für ihn gebeten*" (Luther). If it is now taken in the sense of "almost," it is because it represents a phrase like *ich glaube fast, ich sage fast*, "I believe firmly." The same thing happened to *ungefähr*, which acquires its true signification if completed: "without fear of mistake." So in Latin *pæne*, *ferme*, mean "nearly," although the first is closely related to *penitus*, and the second is a double of *firme*; but we must re-establish the complete idioms: *pæne opinor, firme credam*.¹

The web of Language is being continually embroidered with these words. If I chance to formulate a syllogism, the conjunctions which mark the different clauses of my argument relate to the Subjective Element. They appeal to the understanding, they call it to testify to the truth and concatenation of facts. They are not therefore of the same order as the words which I use to expound the actual facts themselves.

But Language does not stop there. The mingling of the two elements is so intimate that an important part of grammar derives its origin therefrom.

It is in the verb that this mingling is most visible. My readers will guess that I am speaking of *moods*. The Greek grammarians understood this thoroughly: they said that moods served to mark dispositions of the soul, *διαθέσεις ψυχῆς*. As a matter of fact, an idiom like *θεοὶ δοῦν* contains two very distinct things: the idea

¹ On *pæne* see *Mém. de la Soc. de Ling.*, v. p. 433.

of succour lent by the gods, and the idea of a desire expressed by the speaker. These two ideas have in a way entered reciprocally into each other, since the same word which marks the action of the gods marks also the desire of the speaker. The simple word in Homer, *τεθναίης*, "*utinam moriaris!*" besides expressing the idea of dying, expresses also the wish of him who gives vent to this imprecation. In this lies no doubt the original meaning of the optative.

But the optative is not the only mood of this kind. The subjunctive mingles also with the idea of action an element drawn from the *διαθέσεις ψυχῆς*. It is true that it approaches very near to the meaning of the optative. According to the most recent investigations, it would seem that, in the Vedas, the optative was the mood preferred for certain verbs, and the subjunctive for others, although there was no very decided shade of meaning to distinguish them.¹ This abundance of forms shows how important a place was attributed by Language to the Subjective Element. The languages which, like Greek, preserved both moods, attempted to differentiate them. But the generality of languages, somewhat encumbered by this excess of riches, have fused together the optative and the subjunctive.

The Latin future is so near the subjunctive and the optative, that in certain persons it is confused with them. *Inveniam*, *experiar* are, *ad libitum*, either futures or

¹ Delbrück, *Altindische Syntax*, § 172 ; Whitney, *Indische Grammatik*, § 572.

subjunctives. There is in this a true insight into the nature of things. To announce what will happen, is in reality in most human affairs merely an expression of our wishes or of our doubts. We can understand that in early days these shades of meaning used to be confounded. Examples abound which show that there was no precise limit between the future and the subjunctive. Thus the difference between tenses and moods is obliterated in the eyes of the historian of Language.¹ Those who, in our own days, have started the extraordinary idea that the optative was invented to be the mood of *the unreal* (*de l'irréel, der Nichtwirklichkeit*), credited the ancients with the same power of conception that one admires in the creators of Algebra. But in those distant ages Language had less exalted aspirations and more practical aims.

The Subjective Element is not absent from the grammar of our modern languages.

French, to express a wish, uses the subjunctive : *Dieu vous entende !—puissiez-vous réussir !* Certain logicians, to justify the use of the subjunctive, have imagined an ellipse : *Je désire que Dieu vous entende.—Je souhaite que vous puissiez réussir.* In reality, so little has French given up this Subjunctive Element, that it has provided itself with new forms to express it. If it wishes to indicate an action with a reservation of doubt,

¹ Οὐκ ἔσσεται, οὐδὲ γένηται.—Οὐ πῶ ἴδον, οὐδὲ ἴδωμαι.—Εἰ δέ κε μὴ δώσω, ἐγὼ δέ κε αὐτὸς ἔλωμαι, etc. Cf. Tobler, *Uebergang zwischen Tempus und Modus*, in the *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, II. p. 32. See also *Mém. de la Soc. de Ling.*, VI. 409.

it has turns of phrase like the following: *Vous seriez d'avis que . . . Nous serions donc amenés à cette conclusion. . . .* In these phrases it is not a condition that the verb expresses, but a fact which is considered as uncertain. The conditional has therefore inherited from some of them the most delicate usages of the subjunctive and optative.

Indirect speech, with its varied and complicated rules, is like a transposition of the action into another key. What written language obtains now-a-days by means of inverted commas, used to be indicated in spoken language by the different formations of the verb. The subjunctive and optative there found their natural place, since a certain element of doubt was necessarily spread over the whole discourse.

We have still to speak of the mood in which the Subjective Element is to be seen in greatest strength: the imperative mood. What characterises the imperative, is that to the idea of action it unites the idea of the will of the speaker. It is true that in most forms of the imperative it would be vain to seek for syllables which specially indicate this will. It is the tone of voice, the expression of countenance, the attitude of body which are charged to convey it. One must not forget the existence of these elements, which, though not indicated in writing, are none the less an essential part of Language. The imperative shares certain of its forms with the indicative: yet there is no reason to regard these as borrowed from the indicative. I am inclined to think, on the contrary,

that the imperative is the first in date, and that, inversely to what we are taught, when there is identity, it is the indicative which is the borrower. Perhaps those brief forms, such as ἔθι, "come!" δός, "give," στήτε, "stop!" are older than any other part of the conjugation.

We have made an allusion to the duality of human personality. There is in the Sanscrit and Zend conjugation a grammatical form in which this duality appears openly; I mean the first person singular of the imperative, like *bravāni*, "let me invoke," *stavāni*, "let me celebrate." However strange may seem to us a form of command in which the speaker gives orders to himself, there is nothing in it that is not in conformity with the nature of Language.¹ This first person says briefly what is expressed in other languages in a more or less round-about way. French employs the plural. The shepherds of Virgil call upon one another in the second person :

"Insere nunc, Melibæe, puros; pone ordine vites!"

We can now understand why it has always been so difficult to give a true and complete definition of the verb. The ancients succeeded best in this. The moderns, in defining the verb as "a word which expresses a state or an action," leave out a great part of its contents,—the larger and more characteristic part.

¹ It has been wondered whether this first person in *ni* is ancient, or a comparatively recent acquisition. Its presence in Zend, in which it has, in the middle voice, a corresponding form in *nē*, leads one to believe that it is ancient. It should be an archaic fragment, which, being no longer attached to anything, disappeared later on from almost every usage.

If from the *moods* and *tenses* we pass to the *persons* of the verb, we find facts of a yet more striking character.

Man is so far from considering the world from the standpoint of disinterested observer, that we find, on the contrary, that the part which he has appropriated to himself in Language is a wholly disproportionate one. Out of three persons of the verb, there is one which he keeps absolutely to himself (that which is by agreement called *the first*). In this way he already places himself in opposition to the universe. As to the second, it does not take us very far from ourselves, since the whole existence of the second person depends on its being addressed by the first. It may therefore be said, that the third person alone represents the objective portion of Language.

Here also it is permissible to suppose that the Subjective Element is the oldest. Philologists who have tried to analyse verbal inflections should have an inkling of this: while the third person is easily explainable, the first and second persons are those which oppose the greatest difficulties to etymological analysis.

An analogous observation may be made with regard to pronouns. The pronoun *me* was not sufficient: a special pronoun was also needed to indicate that the *me* takes part in a collective action. This is the meaning of the pronoun *us*, which means I and they, I and you, etc. But that is not yet enough: in many languages a special number has been needed to indicate that the *me* counts for half in an action in which two people take part.

This is the origin and real cause of the *dual* number in the conjugation.

We begin to see from what point of view man ordered his language. Speech was not made for purposes of description, of narration, of disinterested considerations. To express a desire, to intimate an order, to denote a taking possession of persons or of things—these were the first uses of Language. For many men they are still practically the only ones. If we descended one or more stages, and sought for the beginnings of human language in the language of animals, we should find that among these the Subjective Element reigns supreme, that it alone obtains expression or comprehension, that it exhausts their faculty of understanding and the entire subject-matter of their thoughts.

We are not therefore concerned with an accessory, a sort of excrescence, but, on the contrary, with an essential part, and with what is no doubt the primordial foundation to which the remainder has been successively added.

CHAPTER XXVI

LANGUAGE THE EDUCATOR OF THE HUMAN RACE

Part played by Language in the operations of the mind—
Wherein lies the superiority of the Indo-European languages—
The place which the Science of Language should hold among
sciences.

THERE is no reason to fear that the importance of Language in the education of the human race will ever be depreciated. We can in this matter trust to the natural instinct of mothers ; their first impulse is to talk to the child, their first joy to hear it speak. Then come masters of all degrees and of all kinds, whose various arts each presuppose Language, even if not absolutely one with it. In every country, in antiquity as in our own days, in China and in India as in Athens and in Rome, Language supplies both the instrument and the matter of the first lessons.

This universal agreement has its reasons ; it is not difficult to understand the great influence which is exercised over the mind by Language, if we reflect that we none of us receive it whole and intact, but are each obliged to build it afresh for ourselves. Here is an

apprenticeship which, though escaping notice and ignored even by those who take part in it, forms nevertheless a kind of training-school of humanity. If it be true that the best instruction is that which gives us the most to do by ourselves, what more profitable study can be imagined for a child?

The greatest attention is needed for the mere recognition of the *word*, since it is a question of disengaging it from what precedes and from what follows, of distinguishing the permanent element from the variable elements, and of understanding that the permanent element is, to some degree, confided to us, in order that we should in our turn wield it, and submit it to the same variations. On what occasions, under what circumstances, after what models? For the most part we are told nothing: on us lies the burden of discovery. The most simple phrase invites us to analyse its thought and to note the special contributions of each word. The adjective, the verb, are the first abstractions understood by the child. The pronouns *me* and *you*, *my* and *your*, which, in changing mouths, transfer themselves from one to the other, contain its first lesson in psychology.

Teaching mounts a step higher in proportion as mankind advances in this apprenticeship.

Let us imagine the effort which must have been required in their own days to speak the ancient languages with even moderate accuracy. It was necessary in the case of the various declensions to establish different series, in which certain inflections corresponded to without resembling each other, and in which other

inflections were similar, but had to be kept apart. An analogous classification was necessary for the persons, tenses, and moods.¹ Herein lies a whole chapter of inner life which began afresh with every individual. The people was therefore possessed of an unwritten grammar, into which no doubt various mistakes and errors crept, but which, since these languages have for centuries been transmitted from generation to generation, must nevertheless have been endowed with a certain fixity.

When we consider the trouble which these ancient languages cost us even now, we are somewhat surprised. But we must remember that the teaching of a mother-tongue has the advantage of being continued at all times and in all places, that it is spurred by the stimulus of necessity, that it has to deal with minds in the freshness of youth, and finally, that it possesses the unique characteristic of linking words to things, and not the words of one language to the words of another language. The same circumstances occur in the case of all mother-tongues; everywhere the mind of the child triumphs over them. I do not mean indeed that the course of time may not produce such difficulties as to disconcert the new generations. But then, as we have seen,² the popular mind extricates itself from these in the most simple manner; it evades the difficulty by means of analogy, of unification, and of suppression. The people being in this matter both

¹ H. Paul, *Principien der Sprachgeschichte*, 2nd edit., p. 24. See also the studies of Steinthal and Lazarus in their Journal.

² See above, Chapters I, VI. and VIII.

pupil and master, whatever it changes, unifies, or abrogates, becomes the rule of the future.

Our modern languages, though less encumbered with a formal apparatus, are yet by no means free. The complication has, moreover, been diverted on to another point. The question is to know how to employ words which are almost wholly devoid of meaning, words so abstract and "servile," that one may all one's life ignore their existence, while duly placing them in their proper position. Here we may notice an action of the mind which has passed to a condition of instinct, similar to that which guides the fingers of the lace-worker when she moves her distaff without looking at it.

Were all the usages of our prepositions to be enumerated and explained, they would form a whole volume. Littré's dictionary gives no less than twelve columns¹ to the word *à* alone. Yet the people finds its way with no difficulty in this seeming chaos. Not, as we have seen, owing to a more or less clear notion of the import of the word: no more than the philologists, would it be able to give a definition that fitted every usage. It allows itself to be directed by a certain number of expressions which the memory retains and uses as models. In this way the turns of phrase are preserved and propagated. Invention always builds on a foundation which exists already.

¹ "By an evil chance, the alphabetical order forced me at the very outset of my labours to treat of the preposition *à*, that most tiresome of all words, and one with which I did not succeed to my satisfaction."—Littré, *Comment j'ai fait mon Dictionnaire*.

Every one has at times admired the unpremeditated turns of phrase in popular language. Besides the pleasure which is felt at any discovery, these encounters have the added advantage of showing us the roads by which the mind has travelled. It is especially on occasions when some passion warms the soul and intensifies its power, that we can best observe these improvisations of the moment.

The human intellect obtains from Language, for its daily operations, the same services that it obtains from numbers for its calculations. One consequence of the infirmity of our understanding, an infirmity familiar to all philosophers, is that it is easier for us to work upon the signs of the ideas than upon the ideas themselves.¹ Before the invention of writing men counted by means of pebbles. The idea certainly had to come first, but this idea is vacillating, fugitive, difficult to transmit; once incorporated in a sign, we are more sure of possessing it, of handling it at will, and of communicating it to others. Such is the service rendered by Language; it makes thought objective.

Having been from the very first associated with the conception, it was not long before the words took the

¹ In this lies the answer to the question why the intelligence of animals remains stationary. They have not arrived at the point of voluntarily incorporating their thought in a sign: their whole ulterior development has remained thenceforward arrested in its very first steps. The idiot child does not speak, but it is not the organs of speech which are lacking to it. The inward labour of observation and of classification which allows the idea to be affixed to the sign is beyond its strength.

place of the conception ; we compare, we connect, we oppose the signs, not the ideas. It is true that behind these signs there survives a partial memory, a fragmentary recollection of the idea which it represents, and we inwardly believe that we could, if we would, recall the idea in its pristine clearness.¹ But it is no less true that in the case of rather complicated operations, of operations to be effected rapidly, the signs are enough for us. Not words alone, but also those unions of words which we have called Articulated Groups,² are necessary. All this goes to form Language. It at the same time renders the ideas manageable, and furnishes the framework of reasoning.

Thinkers have turned this into an occasion for reproach. "Every word represents indeed a portion of actuality,³ but a portion roughly hewn, as though humanity had carved according to its own convenience and its own wants, instead of following the articulations of the reality." Let us suppose for a moment that this reproach is well-founded. Even then how slight it is in comparison with the immense service rendered to the mass of mankind ! However imperfect, Language yet outstrips most of us : we need time to overtake it. How few would be capable of setting to work on their own account to produce these carvings ! We have seen, moreover, that the outlines are not so fixed and unyielding but that they can be bent or enlarged for insertion in new classifications. On the contrary, a philosophical

¹ Taine, *De l'Intelligence*, bk. i. chap. iii.

² See above, p. 166.

³ Bergson.

language such as has often been planned, a language resulting from a system, in which each word should remain for ever delimited by its definition, and in which the affinity of words should be traced from the real or imagined connection of ideas,—such a language may indeed be suitable for a few special sciences, like chemistry, but if applied to human thought, with its fluctuations and its progressions, could not fail to become, in the course of time, a hindrance and a restraint. In proportion as the experience of the human race increases, Language, thanks to its elasticity, acquires new meaning.

Were it necessary to say wherein lies the superiority of the Indo-European languages, I should turn neither to the grammatical mechanism, nor to the compounds nor even to the syntax: I believe it to lie in another direction. It consists of the facility of these languages from the most ancient periods of which we have any knowledge, in creating abstract nouns. If we examine the suffixes which serve for this usage, we shall be astonished at their number and variety. They are by no means peculiar to such and such a language, but are to be found alike in Latin, Greek, Sanscrit, Zend, and in every branch of the family. They are therefore of early date; and indeed of a date so early, that, to borrow the denominations of another science which marks the epochs by the monuments which are left of it, we might speak of a *period of suffixes*, a period which necessarily presupposes a certain power of abstraction and reflection. It is the presence of these nouns in great

number, added to the possibility of making others after the same pattern, which has rendered the Indo-European languages so well fitted to all the operations of the mind.¹ Even at the present day we still make use of the same means of expression, to which hardly anything has been added by posterior ages. If we cared to examine the methods used by modern literature to renew the resources and the character of its style, we should be convinced that it still has recourse to those same abstractions, the first specimens of which were contemporaneous with the Vedas and with Homer.

It is not on this account necessary to imagine transcendent intelligences. There are divers degrees of abstraction to be distinguished. The one in question is derived more from mythology than from metaphysics. The same order of thought is there when the people talks of a reigning fashion or disease, or of electricity running along a wire. The abstractions created by the popular mind assume for it a sort of existence. The world is full of these entities. The form of phrase, in which all subjects are represented as active, is a still surviving witness of this state of mind. Language and mythology issued from one and the same conception. This, as we have already said, is the explanation of the fact that the majority of abstract nouns are feminine ;

¹ It is easy to imagine how useful these suffixes have been for the language of philosophy. Greek, in combining the two pronouns *ποσός* and *ποιός* with an abstract suffix, makes *ποσότης*, "quantity," *ποιότης*, "quality." In the same way, in Latin, *qualitas*, *quantitas*. In Sanscrit, the pronoun *tat*, "this," gives, in combination with the abstract suffix *tvam*, the substantive *tattvam*, "reality."

they are of the same sex as the innumerable divinities which peopled sky, earth, and water. Even at the present day—so great is the continuity of things—those who discuss Matter, Force, Substance, perpetuate more or less this ancient condition of mind.

Accustomed as we are to Language, we do not easily realise the accumulation of intellectual work which it represents. But, to be convinced of this, we have only to take a page of any book, and to suppress all the words which, not corresponding to any objective reality, must be the result of an operation of the mind. Of a page so treated hardly anything will remain. The peasant who speaks of times and of seasons, the merchant who advertises his assortment of wares, the child who brings his notes of conduct or progress, all move in a world of abstractions. The words *number*, *form*, *distance*, *situation*, are so many concepts of the mind. Language is a translation of reality, a transposition in which objects appear already generalised and classified by the work of thought.

Are there in Europe any languages which are more favourable than others to intellectual progress? With the exception of slight differences we can answer in the negative. They are all (or nearly all) sprung from the same origin, built on the same plan, drawing from the same sources. They have been more or less nourished on the same models, perfected by the same education. They are therefore capable of expressing the same

things, although within the limits of this close relationship we can already note certain special aptitudes. But if we wished to realise the help which Language gives to the mind, as well as the particular turn which it imposes, we should have to compare some language of Central Africa or some indigenous dialect of America. In Brazilian, the one word *tuba* signifies: (1) he has a father; (2) his father; (3) he is a father. Actually, *tuba* means "he the father." It is as the speech of a child. Even languages provided with a rich literature do not always form a sufficient support for the mind. In Chinese, this phrase: *Sîn hī thien* may be translated: (1) the saint aspires to heaven; (2) he is a saint to aspire to heaven; (3) he is a saint, who aspires to heaven. Chinese merely says: *Saint aspire heaven*.¹ The service rendered us by our languages is to impose upon us a form that compels precision.

Language has been called an *organism*, a hollow, deceptive word too freely lavished at the present day, and used every time that we want to dispense with the trouble of seeking for true causes. Since certain illustrious philologists have declared that man counted for nothing in the evolution of Language, that he was incapable of modifying anything, or of adding anything, and that one might as well try to change the laws of the circulation of the blood; since others have compared this evolution to the trajectory of a shell or to the orbit of a planet; since this is to-day currently accepted as a

¹ Misteli, in Techmer's *Zeitschrift*, vol. ii.

truth and passed on from book to book: it has seemed to me useful to have it out with these assertions, and once for all to make an end of this phantasmagoria.

Our forefathers of the school of Condillac, those ideologists who for fifty years served as target to a certain school of criticism, were less far from the truth when they said, in simple and honest fashion, that words are signs. Where they went wrong was when they referred everything to a reasoning reason, and when they took Latin for the type of all Language. Words are signs: they have no more existence than the signals of the semaphore, or than the dots and dashes of Morse telegraphy. To say that Language is an organism is but to darken counsel and to sow a seed of error in the minds of men. It might be said, with an equal degree of truth, that writing is also an organism, since we see it evolving throughout the ages, without any one in particular having a very perceptible influence on its development. It might be said that song, religion, law, all the component parts of human life, are each an organism.

If we take nature in its widest sense, it evidently comprises man and the productions of man. The history of morals, of customs, of habitation, of dress, of the arts, as well as social and political history, will, together with Language, form part of natural history. But if we admit a difference between the historical sciences and the natural sciences, if we consider man as furnishing the material for a separate chapter in our study of the universe, Language, which is the work of man,

cannot remain on the other side, and the Science of Language, by a necessary consequence, will form part of the historical sciences. If, on the other hand, on account of phonetics, which study the sounds of language produced by the larynx and the mouth, it were necessary to transfer the Science of Language back to the natural sciences, all the rest, man and all his works, must inevitably accompany it, since human productions, of whatever kind, come after all from the organs of mankind and are directed to those organs.

With still more reason will Semantics belong to the class of historical investigations. There is not a single change of meaning, a single modification of grammar, a single peculiarity of syntax which should not be counted as a small historical event. Will it be said that there is no free will in this domain, because I am not free to change the meaning of words, nor to construct a phrase according to a grammar of my own? We have shown that this limitation of freedom arises from the desire for comprehension, that is to say, it is of the same kind as the other laws which govern our social life. To speak here of natural law is to create confusion.

I have come to the end of my labours. Warned by example, I have avoided comparisons drawn from botany, from physiology, from geology, with the same zeal which others have shown in seeking them out. The exposition of my argument is in consequence more abstract but, I think I am justified in saying, more true.

I have no wish to be unjust towards the theory which, with a certain show of brilliancy, has classed the Science

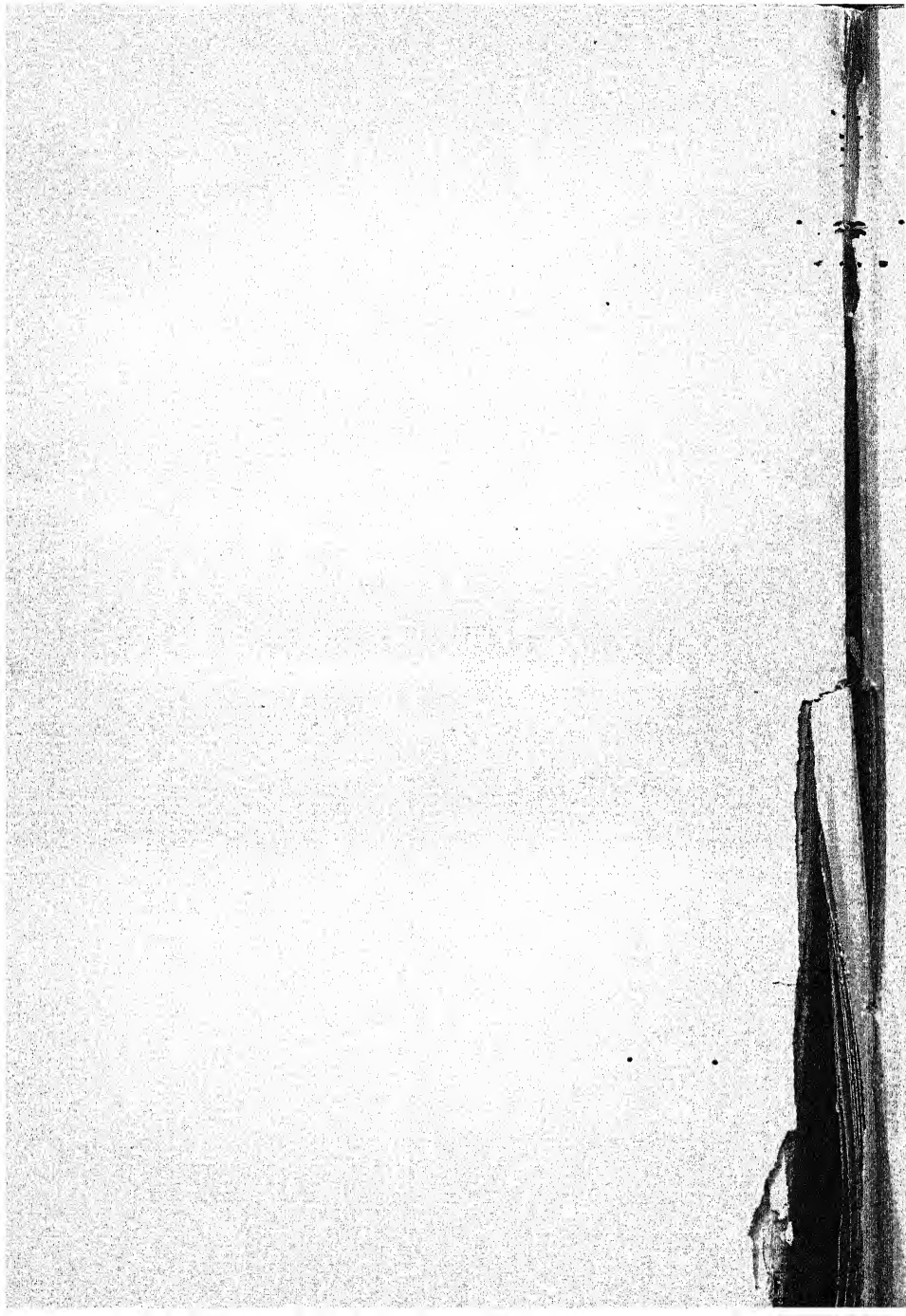
of Language among the sciences of nature. At a time when these sciences rightly enjoyed the favour of the public, it was a clever and politic act. It also imposed on philologists the duty of prosecuting their observations with a redoubled accuracy. Finally this idea contained just the amount of paradox necessary to excite curiosity. If the phrase had been: *regular development, constant progress*, nobody would have cared. But at the words: *blind laws, astronomical precision*, general attention was aroused.

I think, however, that I am right in saying that the history of Language, when referred to intellectual laws, is not only more true, but also more interesting: it cannot be a matter of indifference to us to note, above the seeming chance which governs the destiny of the words and forms of Language, the appearance of laws corresponding in each case to an advance of the mind. For the philosopher, for the historian, for every man who watches the progress of humanity, there is a certain pleasure in verifying this ascent of the intelligence which is perceptible in the slow renewal of languages.

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WHAT IS MEANT BY PURITY OF
LANGUAGE?



WHAT IS MEANT BY PURITY OF LANGUAGE?¹

THERE appeared a few years ago, under some such title as the above, a work by the Swedish professor, Mr. Adolphe Noreen, which instantly attracted attention by the independence of its views. When translated into German, it gave rise to argument and discussion, the inevitable fate of writings which forsake the ordinary path. We propose in our turn to pass judgment upon it; but we are glad to be able to say beforehand, that on the most essential points we are in agreement with the author.

Mr. Noreen is professor of Scandinavian Philology at the University of Upsala. Familiar with all the methods and all the results of modern philology, his long-established reputation as a scholar can only add to the authority of his opinions and of his decisions. These opinions we will now recapitulate for our readers, but without feeling bound to adhere strictly to the original, and

¹ A. Noreen, *Om Språkriktighet*, 2nd edition. Upsala: W. Schultz, 1888. A German translation, by Arwid Johansson, was published in the *Indogermanische Forschungen*, v. 1.

reserving to ourselves the right to substitute for his examples other examples drawn from our own history.

Let us begin by saying that there must be an element of truth in this idea of *purity*, since so many minds, in ancient as in modern days, have been interested in the subject. But it is not easy to justify in the eyes of reason what feeling would dictate to us on this question. No sooner is an attempt made to formulate principles than there arises a difference of opinion, and a consequent beginning of uncertainty. Artists and poets speak of it by the light of instinct alone; philologists, wishing to illuminate it, introduce at the same time their own systems. Let us see if it be possible, by discarding all foregone conclusions, to attain to some degree of clearness.

The first point to examine concerns words of foreign extraction.

The road is harassed by many prejudices. The chief of all these, or, to speak like Bacon, the chief "idol," the one from which all the others are derived, is the determination to consider purity of Language as something akin to purity of race. For all who look at matters in this light, the introduction of a foreign word is a contamination; an English or German word introduced into French is a blot on the national language. It is not in France that this point of view is most frequently to be met with. The Germans have for a century past raised barrier upon barrier to stop the immigration of French words. It would be impossible to give the number of

manifestoes hurled, since the days of Adelung, against foreign words,¹ or the number of societies which have proposed to repel the invasion. Do foreign words merit such a degree of animadversion? Are there not distinctions to be made, a *modus vivendi* to be adopted? Are all foreign words to be equally condemned?

When an art, a science, a fashion, a game, comes to us from abroad, it usually brings in its train its own vocabulary. It takes less time to appropriate terms than to invent them purposely for the expression of ideas or objects which have already been named. A certain kind of music having come to us in the seventeenth century from Italy, our musical language is full of Italian words. Which of us, in speaking of an *adagio*, of a *sonata*, remembers the exotic origin of these appellations? Rabid lovers of purity should not forget that the like has taken place in every epoch; and, since they invoke the classical tradition, we may remind them that in this matter the ancients did exactly the same thing. As the Romans received their writing from the Greeks, everything which refers to the art of writing is Greek, beginning with *scribere* and *litteræ*. And not these alone. Whether it is a question of science, of law, of ritual, of military tactics, of weights and measures, of constructions, of clothing, or of works of art, we find throughout the Latin language traces of Greek and of Greek names. If we could go

¹ One of the last of this kind is that of Professor Herman Riegel: *Ein Hauptstück von unserer Muttersprache. Mahnruf an alle national gesinnten Deutschen*, 1884.

farther back still, we should no doubt find that many technical terms which we have always believed to be Greek were born far from the soil of Hellas. They would lead us to Egypt and to Chaldæa. Borrowings therefore are a characteristic of every epoch. They are as old as civilisation. Objects useful in daily life, the instruments of sciences and of arts, as well as the abstract conceptions which enhance the dignity of man, are not invented twice over, but are propagated from one people to another, to become the common property of humanity. It appears, therefore, legitimate to preserve their name. Words being, in their way, historical documents, it would seem hardly to the point to wish of deliberate purpose to suppress the witness that they bear.

The defenders of purity are not entirely blind to these considerations. But they suggest that—if borrowing be an absolute necessity—nations should have recourse rather to a sister language; that French, for instance, should turn to Italian or to Spanish, while English should borrow from Danish or from Dutch. One would more readily admit these congeneric words, just as (it is Leibnitz who speaks) one more willingly gives admission to foreigners who in their customs and manner of living come near to our own habits. The advice is excellent, but not always easy to follow, since if we can only take the necessities of life where we find them, so also we can only take the words from those to whom they belong. Many terms of parliamentary life are English, because England supplied the first model of the constitutional system. On the other hand, if the English

language uses French words to designate a variety of things which relate to the elegancies of life, it is because the things themselves have come from France.

At least, we are told, words must be modified so that they become unrecognisable, and that the transaction does not strike the eye. In this respect, we could in former days safely trust to popular usage: the foreigner was promptly clothed in a dress which prevented it from attracting notice. But now matters have somewhat changed. The majority of the loans are effected, not through the medium of conversation, but chiefly by the intermediary of written language: foreign words are brought before our eyes in newspapers or books before becoming familiar to our ears. It is therefore more difficult for important modifications to take place. There is, moreover, something repugnant to our modern ideas in an arbitrary alteration: when the French are willing to take back the names of their ancient heroes of the Round Table in the form under which the pronunciation of their neighbours has been pleased to disguise them, how could they at the same time dream of deliberately naming the inventions and ideas which are really new to them?

In the case of scientific terms there is a special interest in preserving them in the form in which they have first appeared. To translate words like *telephone*, *phonograph*, under pretence of purity, is to hamper a work which has a value quite equal to that of the homogeneity of a language; I mean the facility of relations in the European community. Would it be worth while to have

obtained the unification of time, or the uniformity of tariffs, if, after having lowered the material barriers, we raised a wall for the mind? I have before my eyes a Latin grammar published in Germany, in which the author has devoted himself to replacing by German words all technical terms, such as declension, conjugation, indicative, subjunctive, time-hallowed terms which have been accepted throughout the entire world for the last ten or twelve centuries. Thus the indicative becomes *die Wirklichkeitsform*, the active voice *die Tätigkeitsart*. Were it even a grammar of the German language that was in question! But since it concerns Latin grammar, why boggle at Latin words? The ancient words have even the advantage of having become purely conventional terms: to translate *ablative* into *der Woherfall*, merely makes it more difficult for the child to understand the use of the ablative with *in*, in which case it is really a *Wofall*.

Men do not belong only to an ethnic or national group: they also, according to their studies, their profession, their manner of life and degree of culture, form part of ideal communities which are at once more general and more limited. The mathematician lives in a perpetual interchange of ideas with the mathematicians of other countries. The geologist needs to communicate with his colleagues in Germany or America. The merchant wishes to know what is happening on the market of the whole world. It would be unreasonable to oppose obstacles, in the name of an idea of purity, to the use of terms which are the common property of men

devoted to the same interests and to the same pursuits. In this matter youth teaches us a lesson which has not yet been fully understood. On the pretext that certain games which have gone over to France from England used formerly to be played in France, it has been proposed to substitute for the English words the old names by which they were originally known. But this consideration does not seem to have had much weight with the lovers of *foot-ball* or of *lawn-tennis*. These thought, not without reason, that, in order to be on the same footing as their British rivals, to be abreast of the progress of their sport, to communicate with the masters of their particular branch, and, in case of need, enter into competition with them, it was better to know and be able to handle their language rather than the language of ancestors, who, though undoubtedly fine fellows, were never to be met with on the field.

The adoption of foreign words to designate ideas or objects which have come from outside, and which give rise to an international exchange of relations, is not therefore blameable in itself, and can well be justified. In such a case, it is only to be hoped that the borrowing will be done intelligently, and that, in the passage from one nation to another, there will not be substitution of any kind. This happens more often than one would think: reft from its proper surroundings, the borrowed word runs the risk of every kind of deformation and mistake. It was in this way that the French *contredanse* (quadrille) became in English *country-dance*, and that *renégat* became *runagate*. Probably a vague recollection

of *to run away* helped this strange transformation. In the common speech of Holland a *rhetorician* is called *rederijker*, "rich in speech."

As happens in the case of all emigrants, the borrowed words are withdrawn from the stream of thought of the mother country. They take no part in the changes which may, in the land of their birth, modify the term which they represent; so that when, sooner or later, the copy is again confronted with the model, there is no longer any resemblance to be found. The French *loyal* and the English *loyal* no longer express the same sentiment.

English has at all times readily imported new terms. It has thereby gained in doubling its vocabulary, having for many of its ideas two expressions, the one Saxon, the other Latin or French. It can say at will either *kindred* or *family*; an event can be called either *lucky* or *fortunate*. One would have to be greatly infatuated with "purity" to despise this increase of riches; for it is impossible but that among these synonyms there should arise differences which will form so many new resources for thought. But it is clear that these mixtures are products of history, not deliberate and premeditated acquisitions.

When one investigates the repulsion inspired by foreign words in some even first-rate minds, one finds that it arises from associations of ideas, from historical recollections, from political views, in which, truth to tell, the Science of Language is interested to but a slight extent. To German purists, the presence of French words recalls

a period of imitation which they would willingly efface from their history. The Hellenic philologists who banish Turkish words from the vocabulary are continuing after their own fashion the War of Independence. The Czechs, who go so far as to wish to translate the German proper names, in order not to leave one trace of a language under which they had so long suffered, join to their work of expurgation the hope of a coming autonomy. "Purity" in such a case serves as label for aspirations or resentments which may be legitimate in themselves, but which should not delude us as to the final cause of this linguistic campaign. A nation which is sympathetically receptive to outside ideas does not fear to welcome the words by which these ideas are habitually designated. It is abuse alone that is to be condemned. It would be abuse to welcome under foreign names what we already possess. It would also be abuse to employ the foreign words on every occasion, and before every audience.

To find the true measure, we must remember that Language is a work of collaboration, in which the hearer takes an equal part. A foreign word which would be quite in keeping were I addressing specialists, would seem an affectation, or might be a source of obscurity with an uninitiated public. I am not at all shocked to find English words in a French article on horse-racing or on coal-mines; but a man who reads a novel or hears a play, expects the language used to be intelligible to everybody. There can therefore be no uniform solution for this question as to foreign words. The societies which

devote themselves to the purification of Language can only legitimately attend to the language of conversation and of literature. As soon as they push their pretensions any farther, they are but performing a useless and troublesome function.

When it is our moral life that is in question, the presence of foreign words may produce the impression of a discord. The more intimate the sentiments to be expressed, the more contracted does the linguistic circle become. There is here for the reader or listener an intellectual pleasure of a most subtle kind. Like the housewives of old, who prided themselves on consuming the milk from their own farm, the fruits of their own garden alone, a dainty mind is sensitive to a language in which all the words are products of the same soil, and have an air of familiarity and of kinship. This pleasure may become a very keen one when, in this simple language, the writer expresses generous sentiments or weighty thoughts. We seem then to receive the same impression as when we see a fine deed simply done. We have at the same time the vague feeling that all this must have been known to our forefathers, since they already possessed what was needful for saying it, and that in consequence we must be the children of a very ancient and noble race. In such a case, the use of a foreign word is not only devoid of motive, it is actually harmful. This was already understood by the author of the *Précélence du langage françois*, when in speaking of Italian words, at that time so frequent in France,

he said that they were "*non pas françois, mais gâte-françois*" (not French, but mar-French).

It may seem puerile to wish to limit one's vocabulary to words admitted into some one or other particular official collection. Yet I remember hearing a master of the art of writing say, that the idea of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* was a reasonable and a true one, since it teaches the French what words to use if they wish to be generally understood. As the limits of this vocabulary have not seemed narrow to men of the highest genius, very weighty reasons should be requisite to determine any one to seek elsewhere the expression necessary to thought.

It is not the admixture of foreign words that the purity of a language has chiefly to fear, it is rather the unseasonable use of scientific terms. I am speaking now of that extraordinary prose which disguises under abstract substantives the most ordinary things of life. Take for instance the French phrases : *un dynamisme modificateur de la personnalité, une individualité au-dessus de toute catégorisation, une jeunesse qui sentimentalise sa passionnalité.*

The impropriety is not always involuntary ; it is intended to magnify things by exaggeration of language, as when the French talk of *les impériosités du désir, or célestes attentivités*. We find other studies as well as philosophy feeding this obscure and pretentious language with neologisms : medicine, music, exegesis, the Middle Ages. While verbs give birth to the most useless substantives (*des frappements de grosse caisse, des*

ferraillements de verrerie, les perlements de la peau, les serpentements des bras), we find, on the other hand, substantives producing no less extraordinary verbs (*il soleille lourdement, une idée contagionne les esprits*, etc.). We cannot accuse these neologisms of being contrary to analogy: from the point of view of grammar they are impregnable; but their mistake lies in being superfluous, in substituting an expression which is both heavy and colourless for what can be said more simply and more vividly. Voltaire has defined what the French call *le génie de la langue*, "the genius of the language," as "an aptitude for saying in the shortest and most harmonious manner what other languages express less happily." If we accept this definition, we may say that the authors of these neologisms sin against the genius of the French language. This same French language has sometimes been reproached with not lending itself easily to the formation of new words: with these examples before my eyes, I am rather inclined to think that it lends itself too much. English and German have the resource of compound words: but an unsuccessful compound, such as is made every day in both these languages, possesses fewer drawbacks than other neologisms, since the two terms thus momentarily associated separate again at once, while these French abstract nouns, welded together by means of suffixes, seem to be forged for perpetuity.

Everything which is used is exposed to wear and tear: we must not, therefore, be surprised if the same vocables, the same metaphors, when employed during a protracted

space of time, no longer produce the same impression on the mind. The invention of new forms may therefore be accounted for. The important point is that the consumption should not be more rapid than the production. It is irony, caricature, the use of inverted commas, the fierce struggle between the pulpit and the press, the exaggerations of the drama and the "feuilleton," which hasten the inevitable changes of Language. Deliberate will has much more power to undo and to destroy than to create. The origin of words is nearly always lost in semi-obscurity; but we can often give the names of those who have discredited or lowered certain words, or emptied them of their meaning.

This question of Neologism presents the most diverse aspects.

To condemn Neologism in principle and absolutely would be the most annoying and the most useless of prohibitions. Each onward step of a language is the work first of an individual, then of a more or less large minority. A country in which innovations were forbidden would deprive its language of all chance of development. By Neologism, we must understand the bestowal of a new meaning on an old word as well as the introduction of a wholly new vocable. Just as the change which modifies pronunciation is at once imperceptible and constant, to such a degree that a stranger who returns to a country after thirty years of absence can appreciate the march of time, so also is the meaning of words being ceaselessly transformed by the action of

events, of new discoveries, of revolutions in ideas and in customs. A contemporary of Lamartine would find it difficult to understand the language of modern French newspapers. We all work more or less at the vocabulary of the future, whether we are scholars or unlettered, writers or artists, men of society or men of the people. Children have a part in it which is by no means small: as they take up the language at the point to which the preceding generations have brought it, they generally are ten or twenty years in advance of their parents.

The limit at which the right of innovation ceases is not determined by the idea of "purity" alone, which can always be disputed: it is also imposed by the need which we feel of remaining in contact with the minds of those who have gone before. The greater the literary past of a nation, the more does this need impress itself as a duty, as a condition of dignity and of force. Hence arises the idea of a classic epoch, offered for the imitation of subsequent ages; an idea which is in no way artificial or chimerical, if the classical epoch be not relegated to too remote a period. In such a case, it is not the philologists alone who must be consulted, for they might allow themselves to be guided by more or less professional motives. The Swedish philologist, Erik Rydquist,¹ placed the classical age of the Swedish language at about the year 1300. An analogous point of view, though not always openly expressed, is held by many scholars. If they have to decide between two gram-

¹ Died at Stockholm in 1877.

matrical forms or constructions, it is usually towards the more ancient one that they incline. Thus, in Germany, it is Middle High-German which serves as criterion. Every nation must judge for itself how far back into the past it can cast its glances without losing its touch with the present.

It is inevitable that Neologism, having first tried its hand on words, should next attack the construction and the grammar. But it here meets with greater resistance. We can barely, up to the present time, enumerate three or four new turns of phrase which have to any degree succeeded in gaining adoption. There are good reasons for this. To change the construction or the idioms, is to meddle with living things; it is an attack on an inheritance which represents centuries of research and of efforts.

It is only right at this point to make due acknowledgments to a succession of obscure and modest workers, whose names are nowadays but rarely mentioned, but whose achievements still survive: I mean the series of French grammarians, from Ménage to Olivet. I wish to draw attention here to the meed of recognition which is due to them, for modern philology is but too ready to deny or even to condemn their influence.

These worthies, whose names were Du Perron, Coeffeteau, Malherbe, La Mothe Le Vayer, Vaugelas, Chapelain, Bouhours, were not scholars by profession, but for the most part men of the world who had been led by a natural taste to occupy themselves with the problems or

difficulties of the French language. What they had in view was above all the *purity* of the language, which signified on the one hand clearness, and on the other hand propriety. To eliminate all improper or misbegotten expressions, to make war against all double meanings, to discard all that is obscure, useless, low, trivial, such is the enterprise to which they devoted themselves with much abnegation and perseverance.

They sought for *the rules*, if needs were, they invented them. They were "admirable rules." Vaugelas declared that he had found "a thousand admirable rules" in the writings of La Mothe Le Vayer. "I hold this rule," he says elsewhere, "from one of my friends, who had it from M. de Malherbe, to whom must be given the honour thereof." And yet again: "This rule is most admirable, and conducive to the purity and clearness of the language. . . . It is true that in speaking one does not observe it, but style must be more accurate. . . . Neither the Greeks nor the Latins have scruples on this point. But we are more exact in our language and in our style than the Latins, or than any of the nations whose writings we read." The public felt the same on this point, and only asked to be directed.

We have some difficulty now-a-days in imagining a public welcoming interdictions and ready to make prohibitions yet more stringent. The philologist has in this contributed to the education of the public. The modern philologist rejects nothing; all that exists has a reason for existence. But the point of view of these law-givers was a different one, and, in truth, the languages to

which a period of strict regulation has been lacking will under examination still betray, as it were, a lack of primary education. What must alone be regretted is that the purification did not come at an earlier date. The religious wars brought about a delay of more than half a century. If placed under discipline sixty years sooner, the French language would certainly have maintained a greater suppleness, for these worthy masters were as assiduous in preserving as in pruning, and, since they took thought "for all the graces of our language," they would doubtless have saved some of the earlier freedom.¹

They liked and esteemed the task with which they had voluntarily burdened themselves. They recognised its importance, because "it needs but a bad word to bring one of a company into contempt, to discredit a preacher, a lawyer, or a writer. Finally, an evil word, since it is easily remarked, is more capable of harm than a bad argument, which few people perceive." They are conscious of the permanency of their work. "I propound principles which will last no less a time than

¹ I will take as example the gerundive, the use of which has been regulated to excess. To explain what I mean, we will take this sentence: "*Mon père m'a fait en partant mille recommandations*" ("My father gave me on departing much good advice"). Modern grammar insists on restricting "*en partant*" exclusively to the subject. There is here a certain exaggeration, since "*en partant*" means nothing but "at the moment of departure," and we have a right to interpret it as befits the general meaning. Italian has in this respect reserved for itself a greater freedom. It is just to add that this rule was not always observed in the seventeenth century.

our language and our empire. . . . They are maxims which will never change, . . . for even if there be any change in the usage which I have observed, the difference will still, both in writing and speaking, be in accordance with these same observations."¹

It would be a mistake to regard them as bigoted logicians. On the contrary, they had arrived at the conviction that logic was admissible everywhere, save in the matter of Language. "The beauty of language actually consists in this illogical way of speaking, provided always that it is authorised by custom. Here only is strangeness fitting. . . . It is noteworthy that all the ways of speaking which custom has established in contravention of the rules of grammar, should, far from being regarded as vicious, or as errors to be avoided, be on the contrary cherished as an adornment of language, which exists in all beautiful languages whether living or dead."

The want of order and of rule is not confined to words, it extends to idioms and to phrases. "It is indubitable that each language has its special phrases, and that the essence, the wealth, the beauty of all languages consists principally in using those phrases. Not that one may not at times make new ones, whereas it is never allowable to make new words; but it must be done with infinite precaution . . ." Otherwise, instead of enriching the language we corrupt it.

These scholars of the seventeenth century are therefore convinced that in all cases there is one right form,

¹ Vaugelas, *Remarques sur la langue française*.

and one only. So without hesitation they proscribe "the bad form," which is often merely the less used or the earlier form.

The idea of utility is with them dominant over every other consideration. Since men have received Language in order to make themselves understood, to sanction two forms between which a choice were possible, would be to open the door to misunderstandings and discussions. It is not therefore the business of the grammarian to avoid, to flinch from difficulties. He must look them in the face, and establish certain rules. We may smile at this tone of authority, but it is fortunate for the permanence of the French language that it has in the past possessed minds of this temper.

But it is not in the name of their own personal authority that these students of Language pronounce their judgments. It is in the name of right usage, and if asked where they find this right usage, they answer without hesitation that they find it at Court. The language of the provinces can but contaminate the purity of the true French language. Fénelon, in this, agrees with Vaugelas: "The most polished persons have difficulty in correcting themselves of certain mannerisms of speech which they have acquired in their infancy, in Gascony, in Normandy, or even at Paris, from intercourse with servants. . . ." The Court even is not exempt from blame: "It suffers a little," continues Fénelon, "from the dialect of Paris, where children of the highest rank are usually brought up."

I have quoted these opinions on purpose to show how

far removed they are from the theories which now gain credit.

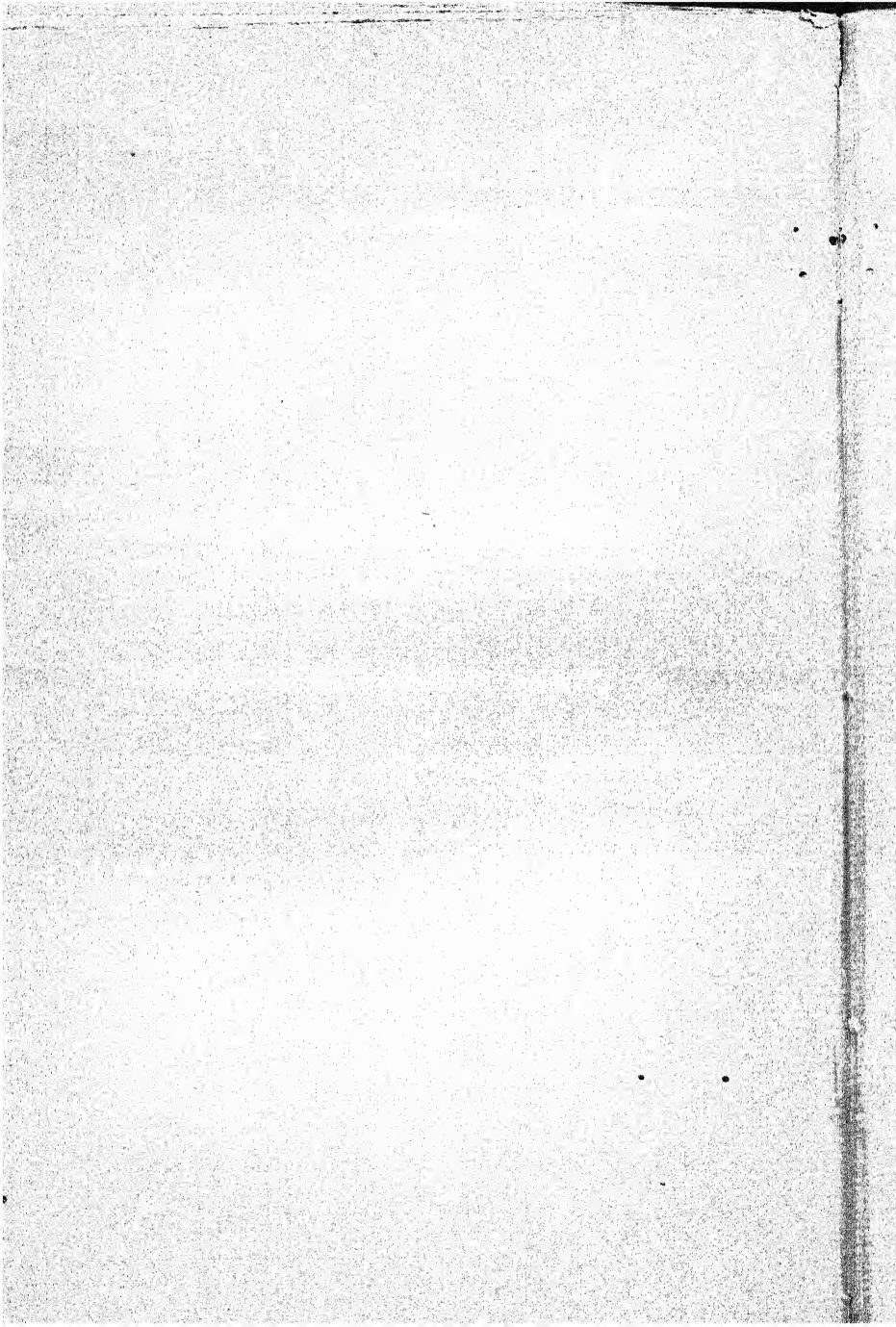
In the eyes of modern philology, all forms, from the moment that they are used, have a right to existence. Indeed the greater the alteration, the greater the interest. The true life of Language is concentrated in dialects; literary language, artificially arrested in its development, has not nearly the same importance. One should beware of treating the mother-tongue as a subject for instruction; such a course merely disturbs the free expansion in the children of their faculty of Language.¹ As we have been shown by the historian Savigny that the idea of *right* and of *ethics* is not applicable to the historical development of a people, so also is the idea of *good* and *evil* not applicable to the development of a language.

These doctrines do not seem to carry conviction to Mr. Noreen. Since Language is our prime method of communication, there must be some agreement as to the manner of using it. Who is to be judge in this matter? We here ask permission to quote the actual words of the Swedish writer: "It will not," he says, "be the historian of Language, who can speak of the past alone; it will not be the philologist, whose function is to describe the laws of Language, but not to dictate them; it will not be the statistician, who merely registers the usage. To whom then is this authority to be attributed? It pertains to the inventor, to him who creates the forms

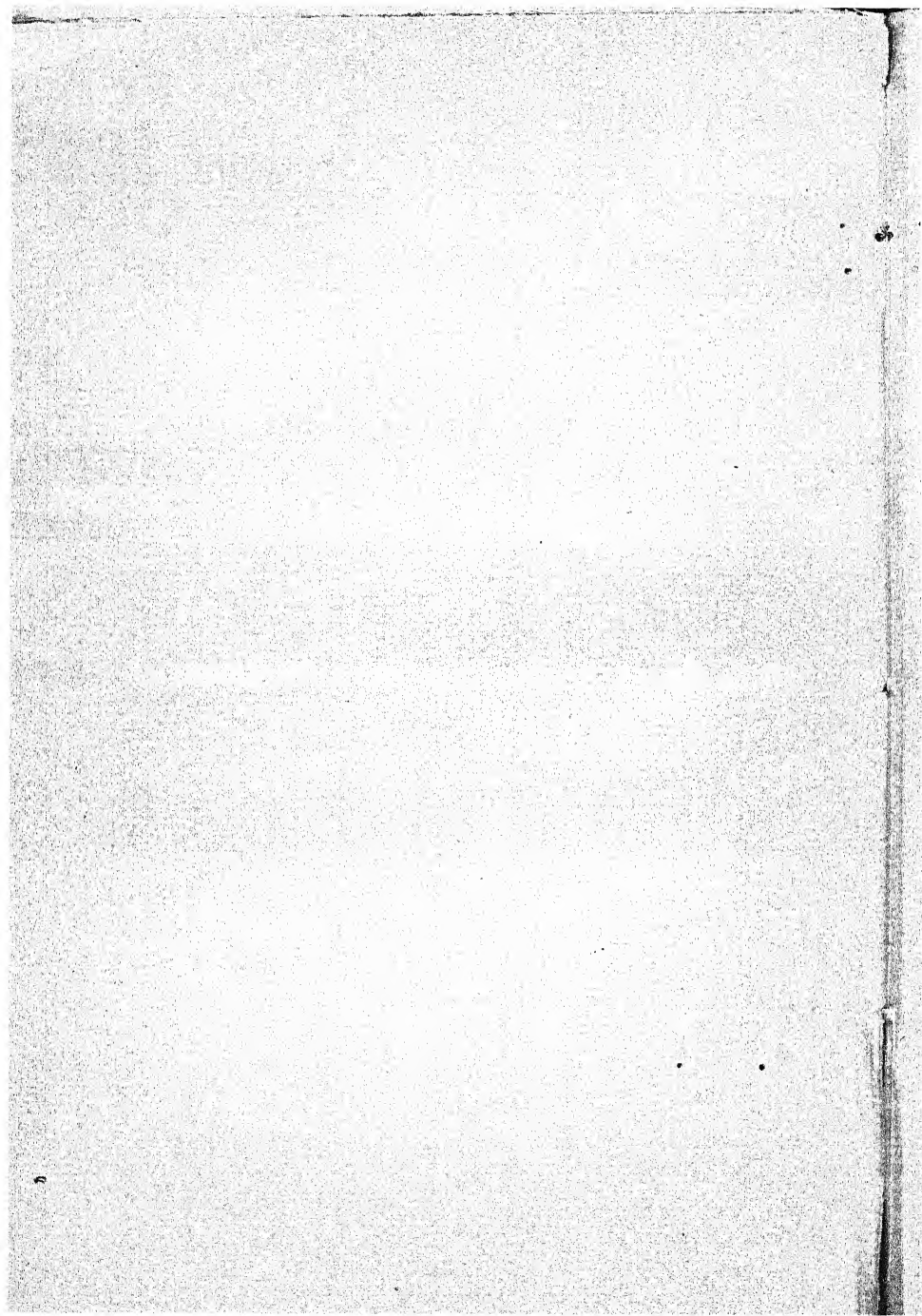
¹ Jacob Grimm, preface to the first edition of his *Deutsche Grammatik*.

used subsequently by the mass of mankind, to the writer, to the philosopher, to the poet. . . . We are the crowd, who clothe our thought in the garment which they have created; we wear this garment and we wear it out. By ourselves we can contribute but little to the development of Language; it is under the sole direction of these masters. We must resign ourselves to being mere pupils, and it is not the business of the pupils to command."

If these words came from less far away, we should doubtless think them less striking. We have frequently heard something of the same kind both in prose and in verse. But it is interesting to find at Stockholm, in a man who has at his command a science of which Vaugelas and Bouhours did not possess even the first elements, the confirmation of principles which these writers followed instinctively in their observations and criticisms. The idea of a type of correctness and purity, furnished by refined society and by the best writers, from having been almost a commonplace during two centuries, was proclaimed vain and inadequate in the name of a science which claimed to draw inspiration from a higher principle: this same idea returns to us to-day from the north, propounded, with conviction and force, by one of the masters of Scandinavian philology.



THE HISTORY OF WORDS



THE HISTORY OF WORDS¹

UNDER this title : *La vie des mots étudiés dans leurs significations* ("The Life of Words as the Symbols of Ideas," English translation, published by Kegan Paul, Trench and Co.), M. A. Darmesteter, a professor of the Sorbonne and a distinguished novelist, has lately written a pleasant little book, calculated to add to the popularity of works on philology. We learn in it successively how words are born, how they live together, and how they die. It has to do with the meaning of words, not with transformations of forms, which belong to another chapter of science. Of all departments of philology this is certainly the one most likely to interest the general public. All display of advanced scholarship would here be out of place. The facts under observation contain no great mystery. The changes which have supervened in the meaning of words are as a rule the work of the people,

• ¹ We here reproduce extracts of what we have written elsewhere on *La Vie des Mots*, by Arsène Darmesteter. In this article, which dates from 1887, will be found the first idea of our Semantics. For this reason, as well as for the sake of some of the examples quoted, we think that this partial reproduction may not be without interest (see above, p. 3).

and, as always when the popular intelligence is in question, we must be prepared, not for a great depth of reflection, but for intuitions, for associations of ideas, sometimes unexpected and strange, but always easy to follow. It is therefore a curious and fascinating spectacle to which we are bidden by this history.

A mind, however, which is not satisfied with mere appearances may desire to penetrate, behind the varied and changing aspect that it presents, to the first cause, which is none other than the human intellect: for to say that words are born, live together and die, is indisputably pure metaphor. When we speak of the life of Language, or when we call languages living organisms, we are using figures of speech which may help us to make ourselves more intelligible, but which, if taken literally, will land us in the realm of dreams. M. Darmesteter has perhaps not been always sufficiently on his guard against this kind of setting. As it is easier for men to observe outward objects than to read within themselves, we are usually more ready to discuss the products of the mind, than the faculty from which these emanate. But while yielding, for the sake of greater facility of speech, to this natural inclination, it is advisable from time to time to rectify the illusion. We must not be afraid of occasionally examining the interior of the instrument to which we owe these projections. Apart from the human mind, Language has neither life nor reality.

Almost simultaneously with the book of which we are speaking, there appeared in Germany the second edition of a somewhat difficult and ponderous work, which,

among other questions, discusses the subject treated by M. Darmesteter. We mean the *Principles of Language* of Mr. Hermann Paul. The author is professor of the German language and literature at the University of Freiburg. In the main these two works complete each other : they are both volumes of *Semantics*.

By a noteworthy coincidence, the two authors start by agreeing on one particular point: this is that each, although having doubtless at his command a fairly large number of languages, has preferred to take for his special field of study his mother-tongue. This is an indication which is not without importance. The investigation in question is one which demands an intimate and direct knowledge of the subject, and is thus unlike an inquiry in phonetics or morphology. The modifications which have come about in the body of the language, such as the suppression of a letter or syllable, the welding of a new inflection, the substitution of one termination for another, strike the eye at once; but the observations which engross the student of *Semantics* are more elusive. It is chiefly when we have to note the impression made on the mind by words that the chances of error are multiplied; they are almost inevitable in dealing with a foreign language. A German writer who has touched on these subjects repeats again and again in his books that the French word *ami* is far from possessing either the ring of sincerity or the depth of the German *Freund*. An ingenuous prejudice, but one which is not difficult to understand! A few years ago, another scholar detected

in the French *merci* a certain wounding and degrading element : he was thinking of the Latin *mercedem*. These kinds of delusions show us the danger. They are a proof that the most familiar ground is also the best for this kind of research. When the general outlines of the science of Semantics have been traced out, there will be no difficulty in verifying in other languages the observations taken in the mother-tongue. Once the general divisions established, we can add to them all facts of a like order gathered from no matter where.

Let us therefore, without further delay, penetrate into the domain of Semantics, and observe some of the causes which govern this world of speech.

We will begin with a point which has a real importance for the history of meanings, and which, till these last few years, we have not taken sufficiently into account : this is the influence which the words of a language exercise over each other from a distance. The signification of certain words becomes more and more restricted, because they have colleagues which are expanding their meaning. In dictionaries in which each term is studied on its own merits alone, we hardly perceive the play of this kind of compensation and balance ; it is only in the most recent and most fully developed vocabularies, as, for example, in the continuation of Grimm's dictionary, that the authors have begun to give due place to this interesting series of parallels. Thus in the old French language, the verb *traire* maintained all the uses of the Latin *trahere* : *traire l'épée*, *traire l'aiguille*, *traire les*

cheveux, were habitually said. Whence comes it that so common a term has ended by being reduced to the single signification which it bears to-day, of *traire les vaches*, *traire le lait*? It is entirely owing to the fact that a rival of Germanic origin—*tirer*—has in the course of centuries invaded and occupied its whole domain. The human mind is averse to hoarding useless riches: it little by little discards what is superfluous. However, and this is an observation on which M. Darmesteter is right to insist, a word may be in jeopardy, may indeed even succumb, without its compounds and derivatives being at all affected. As witnesses to the ancient usage, the French still have the compounds *extraire*, *soustraire*, *distraindre*, the substantives *trait*, *attrait*, *retraite*.

A similar fate befell the French verb *muer*, which had to yield all save a small corner of its territory to a new-comer, *changer*. *Commuer* and *remuer* have survived the ruin of their primitive. The history of *sevrer* is the same, *séparer* having almost entirely ousted it. This kind of contest, or, to use the Darwinian language, this struggle for life, is particularly striking, when the two competitors are, as in the last example, children of the same stock. This kindred origin makes, moreover, no difference in essentials.

In the central provinces of France, towards the sixteenth century, the *r* when placed between two vowels took the sound of an *s* or *z*. This change of pronunciation brought about the change of *chaire* (*cathedra*) into *chaise*. Commynes, in the fifteenth century, could still say: "*Ladite demoiselle était en sa chaire et le duc de Clèves*

à côté d'elle." The modern form having prevailed, the earlier vocable was compelled to beat a retreat, remaining only to designate the pulpit or the professor's chair.

Every new word introduced into a language causes a disturbance analogous to that resulting from the introduction of a new-comer into the physical or social world. A certain length of time is needed for things to settle down and subside. At first the mind hesitates between the two terms: this is the beginning of a period of fluctuation. When, to denote plurality, it became the custom in fifteenth-century France to employ the periphrase *beau coup*, the ancient adjective *moult* did not incontinently disappear, but it began from that time forward to age. Then, after all kinds of uncertainties and contradictions, one of the two competitors steals a decided advantage over the other, distances its adversary, and reduces it to a small number of uses, even if not absolutely effacing it. In expounding these facts, we find ourselves in our turn falling into the figurative language with which we reproach M. Darmesteter, so naturally does this form present itself to our minds. But every one understands that it is a question of mere acts of the mind. When, for any reason, we have begun to adopt a new term, we little by little engrave it in our memory, we render it familiar to our organs, and we transfer it from the reflective to the spontaneous regions of our intelligence; so that it is the same with this new term as with a gesture, which by dint of repetition becomes peculiar to one's self, and ends eventually by forming part of one's personality.

Truth to tell, the acquisition of a new word, whether it has come to us from some foreign idiom, or has been formed by the association of two words, or has issued suddenly from some ignored corner of society, is of comparatively rare occurrence. What is infinitely more frequent, is the application of a word which is already in use to some new idea. Therein lies in reality the secret of the growth and renewal of our languages. For we must note that the addition of a new signification in no way injures the original meaning. They can both exist, without influencing or harming each other. The more a nation has advanced in culture, the more numerous and diverse are the acceptations accumulated by the terms of which it makes use. Does this result from poverty of language? or from sterility of invention? He would be but a superficial observer who could think so. We will now explain how things really come about.

In proportion as a civilisation gains in variety and in richness, the occupations, the acts, the interests of which the life of the society is composed, are divided among different groups of men: neither state of mind nor trend of activity are the same in the cases of priest, soldier, politician, artist, merchant, farmer. Though they have inherited the same language, the words become in each case coloured with a distinct shade, which pervades and finally adheres to them. Habit, surroundings, the whole ambient atmosphere, determines the meaning of the word and corrects its too general signification. The most comprehensive words are therefore for that very reason those which have the greatest aptitude for lending

themselves to numerous usages. At the word *operation*, if pronounced by a surgeon, we have a vision of a patient, a wound, the instruments for cutting; if spoken by a soldier, we think of armies on a campaign; if by a financier, we understand that the matter concerns fluctuations of capital; if by an arithmetic master, it is a question of additions and subtractions. Every science, every art, every trade, in composing its terminology, marks with its impress the words of the common language. Imagine all these divers acceptations enumerated in succession, as is done in our dictionaries; we should be surprised at the number and variety of the significations. Does this result from the poverty of the language? No; it comes from the wealth and activity of the nation.

I have before my eyes a German-French dictionary, in which, to gain room, the author begins by distinguishing in the French language two hundred and thirty-four different occupations, sciences, or professions, of which he gives a list, and to each of which he affixes a number. The reader is warned that he must always refer to this table. When the word is followed by a 1, it is taken as a term of theology, 7 indicates anatomy, 9 arithmetic, 21 astronomy, 51 the language of carpenters, 118 that of bookbinders, 233 that of coachmen. One single word, for example *effet*, *exercice*, *conversion*, in the body of the dictionary, is followed by five or six different translations, each of which has its number. We see how mistaken are those who, to estimate the wealth of a language, think it sufficient to count the vocables.

No name has so far been given to the faculty which

words possess of appearing under so many aspects. It might be called *Polysemia*. We may say in passing, that the inventors of new languages (and the number of these has specially increased within the last few years) do not take sufficient account of this faculty; they think that they have done all that is needful when they have provided each word with one representative, never dreaming that for one single word they ought often to create six or eight; or again, if in their language they succeed in reproducing the French Polysemia, the English and the Germans reasonably complain that they are made to speak French in Volapük.

How is it that this multiplicity of meanings produces neither obscurity nor confusion? It is because the word reaches us already prepared by what precedes and by what surrounds it, interpreted by the time and place, determined by the characters who are on the stage. Curiously enough, it has but one meaning for the hearer as for the speaker, since there is an active way of listening which accompanies and anticipates the speech. We have only to light unexpectedly upon a conversation already in full swing, to realise that words by themselves are but uncertain guides, and need that setting of circumstances which, like the key in music, determines the value of the signs. Writers of comedy fully realise this faculty of Polysemia, which is the source of the cross questions and crooked answers with which they enliven their audiences.

The diversity of social surroundings is not the only

cause which contributes to the growth and renewal of the vocabulary. Another cause is the need inherent in our natures of representing and depicting by means of images that which we think and feel. Words too frequently employed cease to make any impression. It cannot be said that they wear out. If the only function of Language were to appeal to the intelligence, the most ordinary words would be the best: the nomenclature of algebra does not change. But Language is not addressed solely to reason: it strives to touch, to persuade, to soften. Thus, for things which are as old as the world, we find new figures of speech arising, sprung from no one knows where, perhaps from the brain of a great writer, more often from that of some unknown person. If the images are sound and picturesque, they are welcomed and adopted. Employed originally as figures of speech, they may in the long run become the actual name of the thing.

The subject of Metaphor is inexhaustible. There is no genuine connection or fugitive resemblance which has not furnished its contingent; no rhetorical trope is too bold for Language to use every day as a matter of course. The examples are so numerous, that the only difficulty is to choose. The maritime vocabulary seems at all times to have possessed a special attraction for the dweller on dry land: hence, for the most ordinary actions, a continual deposit of nautical terms. *Accoster* (to accost) a passer-by, *aborder* (to broach, lit. board) a subject, *échouer* (to fail, lit. to strand) in an undertaking, all these are metaphors taken from the sea.

Words in constant use, such as *to arrive*, have the same origin. It must not be thought that this is the case in modern languages alone. The Latin verb meaning "to bear," *portare*, which began at an early date to strive for mastery with *fero*, and which Terence already employed when speaking of news which is brought, signified "to take into port." We have resumed some part of it in *to import, export, deport*. It was a term belonging to the merchant service. Greek in this matter showed less desire for innovations, so that *portare* belongs exclusively to the Latin tongue. As a rule, when, for the expression of a familiar idea, one of the ancient languages departs from the usage of its brethren, we may take it for granted that it has adopted a metaphorical expression. We know that *opportune, importunate*, are in a like manner figures of speech borrowed from the idea of a more or less easy landing-place.

The horse and horsemanship have supplied a large amount of figurative expressions. A whole volume has been compiled out of them. They may be classed by epochs, the most ancient terms having already passed into a condition of colourlessness. The French, for example, say of a man who has through some shock momentarily lost the use of his faculties, that he is *désarçonné* (unsettled, lit. unhorsed) or *démonté* (unhinged, lit. dismounted); of a confused speaker they say that he *s'enchevêtre* (gets entangled) in his arguments, comparing him to a horse whose legs are entangled in the tether of his halter (*chevêtre* = *capistrum*). They continue the same

comparison of an animal at pasture by saying that he appears to be *empêtré* (*impastoriatus*, entangled); *embarrassé* would be more polite, but would bring us back to the same idea of a bar serving as a restraint. Finally there are words of whose metaphorical origin we are no longer conscious. Thus *travail* (work), which plays so large a part in economical discussions, and which is commonly used by a writer or an artist in speaking of his productions, leads us back to the same image of a horse shackled and bound. Thanks to the turf, this factory for metaphors is not likely to come to a standstill. At the present day we hear of pupils *qu'on entraîne* (who are being trained), and of amateurs *qui s'emballent* (who lose their heads, lit. run away).

Again, what a number of expressions, and those of the most various kinds, Language owes to sport. When in familiar speech the French say of some one that he seems *déluré* (wide-awake), they use a metaphor borrowed from falconry, the falcon, which is *déluré* or *déleurré*, being one which does not allow itself to be taken by the lure. In a quite different style, when Pauline, speaking of dead Polyeucte, cries:

*"Son sang, dont ses bourreaux viennent de me couvrir,
M'a dessillé les yeux et me les vient d'ouvrir,"*

the heroine of Corneille uses an image of like origin, *dessiller* (which should be written *déciller*) meaning merely to unstitch the eyelashes of the falcon, which had been temporarily blinded for taming purposes.

We see how different a fate may in the course of time

befall two terms of identical origin : so great a divergence is explained by the successive stages of the journey, and by the good or bad treatment which the word has undergone by the way. *Dessiller les yeux* has been employed in religious language : this is what gives it dignity and nobleness. For it is a great and inestimable benefit for a nation to have in its literature a sacred book that all read and know. The language may subsequently sustain all kinds of injuries, it will always possess a source of purification. This service was rendered to the English language by the Bible of 1611, to German by Luther's translation. The great preachers of the seventeenth century rendered an analogous service to the French language. There are, on the other hand, dark corners of literature which wither all that they touch, and which, if they appropriate an expression, return it tarnished and dishonoured.

Like shells which strew the seashore, relics of animals which existed, some but yesterday, some long centuries ago, languages are filled with the spoil of modern or ancient ideas, some still living, others long since forgotten. Every civilisation, every custom, every conquest, and every dream of mankind, has left a trace, which may, with a little attention, be brought to light.

Consistency of style, coherency of metaphor, however tight to recommend, is absolutely to seek in Language ; or rather, it is possible and necessary for the topmost stratum only. Otherwise, we should deprive ourselves of the simplest expressions, and speech would become as difficult as is the daily intercourse of life among those

Asiatic religions in which all that has ever had life is regarded as impure. The ancient languages are subject, in this respect, to the same conditions as the modern ones, being ancient in relation to us alone, and having themselves inherited the legacies of centuries. When Sallust makes Catilina say: "*Cum vos considero, milites, et cum facta vostra æstumo, . . .*" he thinks no more than we do ourselves of the origin of expressions which seem to him quite simple. Yet *considero* is a metaphor borrowed from astrology and *æstumo* from banking. Were we to believe the lists of *roots* drawn up quite arbitrarily by Hindoo and Arab grammarians, we might be deluded into thinking that languages began with the most general ideas. We perpetually find among them roots which signify "to go, resound, shine, speak, think, feel." But it is our ignorance of a previous age which is sole cause of this delusion.

Collections of rhetoric contain no catachresis, litotes or hyperbole of which popular language does not perpetually furnish abundant examples. A grammarian of the eighteenth century, Dumarsais, wrote a treatise on tropes, one edition of which had the unexpected honour of being dedicated to Mme. de Pompadour. But what are these examples, culled from the surface of the soil, compared to those which are exposed to view by deeper excavations? Were we to say that there exists an idiom in which the same word which designates the lizard signifies also a muscular arm, because the movement of the muscles under the skin has been compared to that of a lizard, our explanation would be received with

doubt, or at all events we should be supposed to be referring to the imaginations of some savage people. Yet the word in question is *lacertus*, which means lizard, and which has often been used by poets and prose writers to designate the arm of a hero or athlete. At other times the mouse has been substituted for the lizard, whence we get *musculus*, a word which means, as our readers are aware, sometimes *mouse* and sometimes *muscle*. This singular image seems to have been a favourite one at all times. Littré draws attention to the fact that in French the leg muscle of a leg of mutton is called *souris*. In modern Greek the rat is called *mys pontikos* (water rat), or more shortly, *pontikos*. Now the adjective has also replaced the substantive in the case of the other meaning, and *pontikos* designates the muscle.

Our author has tried by means of pictures, or, as we now call them, schemes, to demonstrate the radiation or connection of the different meanings of a word. Sometimes he explains it as a star, sometimes as a broken line. But it must be remembered that these complicated figures of speech are only valuable to the philologist: the inventor of the new meaning forgets at the moment all previous meanings save one, so that associations of ideas are always in pairs. It is in no way the business of the people to peer into the past; the popular mind knows but the signification of its own day. In this connection an ingenious comparison has been drawn with those bold climbers who remove from under the right foot the cramp iron which supported it, as soon as they have placed the left foot on the following one.

The philologist is alone in his search for the trace of these moveable steps.

Any one who, in compiling the history of the variation of meanings, took the words only into consideration, would either run the risk of losing a portion of the facts, or be in danger of explaining them wrongly. A language is not formed solely of words ; it is composed of groups of words and of phrases.

We have all, when looking out some uncommon word, often read in our dictionaries, "Now used only in the expression . . ." Then there usually follows some proverbial idiom or some technical term, or a phrase more or less devoted to some special use. If we reflect on the cause of this phenomenon we shall be led to consider the elements of Language under a new aspect. The philologist attributes to the word a personal existence which is continuous through all the associations and combinations in which it takes part. But in reality, as soon as the word has entered into a formula which has become at all common, we perceive only the formula. Vocables which have long since ceased to be employed on their own merits, and which are difficult to recognise when withdrawn from the one position left to them, are still preserved in certain special associations. What, for example, is the French word *conteste* ? It has dropped out of use for so long, that we should find it difficult to say even to what class it belongs. But it still appears in the idiom, *Sans conteste*. What, as the name of a colour, is *bis* ? It used

to designate brown or black. *À tort ou à droit, à bis ou à blanc . . . l'un veut du blanc, l'autre du bis*, were common expressions. It was the Italian *bigio*. But it is now used only when speaking of bread. *Demeure*, in the sense of delay, has almost disappeared; but everybody understands the expression, *Il y a péril en la demeure* (there is danger in delay).

It is not the word which forms a distinct unity for our mind, it is the idea. If the idea be simple, it matters little that the expression of it should be complex: our mind will be conscious of the totality only. One might even go farther, and wonder whether the majority of men have a clear and distinct conception of the word. Every one knows that illiterate people are guilty in writing of the strangest separations, as also of the most curious couplings. This does not preclude some of them from handling thought with accuracy, speech with correctness. Their intelligence, while embracing the wholes, has never had leisure to descend to details. Missionaries who first fix in writing the language of savage peoples, know how difficult it is to discover where the words begin and end. If Etruscan has so far resisted all attempts at deciphering, it is owing in part to the defectiveness of the divisions.

Accustomed as we are to the service which writing renders us, we are tempted to show ingratitude towards it. The new school of *fonetists* does not perhaps pay enough attention to this, at least in the case of the more advanced portion of the school—for I do not wholly disapprove of the undertaking. In our modern

languages, in which so many vocables of different origin and signification have become identical for the ear, the words are not engraved on the mind by their sound alone, but also by their aspect. In the absence of orthography, we should be driven to have recourse to an explanatory commentary, as do the Chinese, and as we do ourselves when we say: *the site of a building, the sight of a rifle*.

Once it has been framed in an idiom, the word loses its individuality and has no further concern with outside events. It is therefore not accurate to speak, even in metaphor, of the life and death of words. A word may be dead for the mind, and yet continue to figure in some special context, in which it is perceived not as a word, but as the integral portion of a whole. Imprisoned in this retreat, it escapes all changes of Language, all revolutions of usage and of ideas. The French say *rez-de-chaussée*, although *rez* (*rasus*) has dropped out of ordinary use. *Faire un pied de nez* survives in spite of the metric system. They still speak of *rhumes de cerveau*, although in the eyes of modern medicine the brain has little to do with a cold in the head.

As soon as a word has passed into an idiom, its proper and individual meaning is obliterated for us. These kinds of incoherences usually strike foreigners more than ourselves, especially if they have learnt the language by scientific methods, rather than by use. Thence the purism so readily affected by foreigners who speak and write the English or French which they learnt at school.

One may deduce from this class of facts some conclusions on the manner in which languages are modified and disintegrated. If we depended on the teachings of Phonetics alone, words would be transformed singly and independently, according to the number of syllables and position of the accent, and in conformity with invariable rules. Moreover, inflections which were doomed to perish would be simultaneously extinguished in all words of the same class. The construction would be modified in a uniform manner in all phrases composed of the same logical elements. But we find nothing of the kind. Regularity does not exist, and the reason for this is, that a language is by no means a collection of words only, but includes groups already collected and so to speak articulated. In the Christian inscriptions of the first centuries, we find that in the middle of a Latin which is extremely incorrect and already half Roman, there survive whole formulas of a very tolerable Latinity: these are formulas which had been saved from oblivion by daily usage, and in the case of which analysis and comprehension of the elements had been rendered unnecessary by a previous familiarity. A nation which forgets its language somewhat resembles the school-boy who recites a half-remembered lesson: though there may be some parts in which the words present themselves disjointedly and imperfectly to his memory, there are also others in which they come back in a rush, whole phrases at a time. Again, we observe something of the same kind when two languages touch and mingle, for example on the frontiers of two countries. It is

not words alone but entire phrases which pass from one people to another. M. Schuchardt's work on the mingling of languages furnishes examples of this fact as strange as they are various.

We are taught, and rightly, that the cases of the Latin declension no longer exist in French: yet *leur* and *Chandeleur* are genitive plurals. It is doubtless through no special gift of longevity that they have survived their kindred: it is owing to the idioms in which they were, so to speak, embalmed.

Fèvre, in Old French, meant "workman" (*faber*); *orfèvre* preserves the Latin construction. When the French say *la grand'rue*, *la grand'mère*, they speak the language of the thirteenth century. They are genuine fragments of Latin or Old French, borne along by the language of to-day, regardless of the changes in grammar and in construction.

We each of us possess an assortment of abbreviated expressions, intelligible only to our intimate friends. Supposing that these abbreviations are adopted all round us, that they become of current usage among a whole class of people, and that they are disseminated in the press, they may one day take their place in the language. Such is the origin of *general*. It is evident that this is an insufficient expression for the designation of a military grade. But if we go back to the sixteenth century, we find that the phrase is completed in *captain general*. There are, in the animal kingdom, certain crustaceans which, when seized by one of their

claws, fall hastily to the ground, leaving the enemy in possession of the claw, and making use of the nine others to flee with utmost speed. Our idioms undergo an amputation of the same kind with this difference, that the claw which remains takes for us the place of the whole animal. What is the meaning of the name *école centrale*? Absolutely nothing. The words *des arts et manufactures* must be added. I have often taken part in interminable discussions on *l'enseignement spécial*, and on the meaning which the founder had probably attributed to that adjective. No one, not even the founder himself, had thought of referring to the charter of foundation, in which there is mention of *un enseignement spécial pour l'agriculture, le commerce et l'industrie*. The finest epoch of the French language was familiar with this jargon. There was *canal*, when the king and his court amused themselves on the canal at Versailles. There was *caveau*, when the court of Monseigneur played in the little room so named. Those very names of *monseigneur, monsieur, madame*, are ellipses concealing a more complete and resounding title.

The philologist notes that in all languages the adjective has a tendency to replace the substantive. This law, which seems to belong solely to grammar, presupposes another which belongs to psychology and to history. A few examples will help to make my meaning clear. French has lost the ancient word which served to designate the liver (*jecur*), and has replaced it by an adjective signifying "fed on figs" (*ficatum*, "le

foie"). But what are we to conclude from this change? That we here have a word belonging to the language of cookery. Those who listen in restaurants to the calls between the dining-room and the basement may detect many an ellipse of the same kind. There is mention in French law-books of a certain class of loan which is called *le prêt à la grosse* (bottomry-bond): this adjective might leave us long in doubt, did we not discover from elsewhere that it concerned a loan *à la grosse aventure*, a sort of contract applying to risks by sea. The more one is familiar with some profession or class of life, or for that matter the more one wishes to appear so, the more use will one make of this shorthand language. A *private* passes from *active service* (*l'active*) to *the reserve* (*la territoriale*). In Paris a man of fashion attends all the *premières*. Besides a saving of time, there is in these *sous-entendus* something flattering to one's vanity, like the charm of an initiation. All progress, all modern inventions increase their number. We wait for *the express*, or we take *a special* in the railway stations. At the time of the Paris Exhibition of 1878, visits were made to *le captif des Tuileries*. Slang makes use of the same process. "*Cache ta menteuse*," says one of Zola's characters to his chattering daughter. These examples are drawn from close at home, from the language of the present day; but we might quite equally take them from other modern languages or from the languages of antiquity. *Brother* is in Spanish *hermano*, which represents the Latin *germanus*, already employed in the same sense; but in itself it is an adjective which

signifies "real, natural." Cicero, when saying in one of his familiar letters that on a certain occasion he had behaved like a real ass, uses this word: *Me asinum germanum fuisse*.

Our examples have so far consisted almost wholly of substantives ; but something similar exists in the case of verbs. By force of habit complements can make themselves understood by implication, so that, from being transitive, the verb becomes neuter. This is the counterpart of what we have seen in the case of the adjective turned substantive. *Are you exhibiting?* is a question that is perfectly clear to a painter. *A woman who entertains* is universally allowed. Purchasers understand the meaning of *a shop which is selling off*, or, in France, of *une maison qui liquide*. Our spoken language is full of these expressions : so much so indeed, that it has been said that an abundance of neuter verbs is a sign of civilisation. Sometimes the idiom is curtailed from the middle : of all methods of abbreviation, this is undoubtedly the least desirable. Yet geologists hold forth on the subject of *tertiary man*. A French doctor would talk of *paralytiques progressifs*. I have heard a member of the French Academy, speaking of Mr. Max Müller, call him *philologue comparé*. Among candidates at the Sorbonne, everybody knows what is meant by *un bachelier scindé*. Again, to quote from what are, we grant, terrible barbarisms, when, in religion, we talk of *Protestants* and *Catholics*, we are making use of an ellipse which, though more ancient, is nevertheless similar in kind.

We conclude that in a question of Language there is one rule which holds sway over all others. Once a sign has been found and adopted for some particular object, it becomes adequate to that object. You may mutilate and materially reduce it, it still maintains its value. On one condition that is to say: that the usage which attaches the sign to the object signified, remains uninterrupted. To reconstruct a language with the sole help of etymology is a risky undertaking, which may succeed up to a certain point in the case of the generality of words, but which comes into collision with the particular kind of obstacle resulting from idioms. One realises this when deciphering the text of a language which has not reached us through a living tradition. The origin of the word is often clear, the grammatical form leaves room for no doubt, yet the inmost meaning escapes us. They are like faces, whose features we can discern, but whose thought remains impenetrable. The only ancient languages which we really know are those which have come down to us with an accompaniment of lexicons and of commentaries,—Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Sanscrit, Arabic, Chinese.

Littre, in a charming work entitled *Pathologie du Langage*, has collected a certain number of facts of the same kind. We strongly recommend this fragment to the notice of our readers: it is an extract from his great dictionary, and a collection of interesting and curious facts.¹

¹ Littre, *Études et Glanures*. (This portion has been published in the *Bibliothèque Pédagogique*. Delagrave.)

But what the great French scholar calls *pathology* is the normal development of Language, and an every-day event. It is through this only that languages can adapt themselves to the expression of new ideas. It implies no disease. When by a circuit they have attained to the creation of a new term, they obliterate the path along which they had travelled. Thus for the most part etymology has but an historical interest. In ordinary life, in the discussion of philosophical or political ideas, the investigation of the origin of a word may serve as starting-point; but it would be the mark of an inferior mind to dwell too insistently upon this, or to base upon it too long or important a chain of inference.

It has been rightly said that words are like glasses, which must be polished and rubbed for a long time, lest, instead of showing, they but conceal things. Too vivid a recollection of etymology often spoils the expression of thought, which it is in danger of disturbing by all kinds of false reflections. The work of centuries and the benefit bestowed by a long succession of thinkers has been to enfranchise and emancipate words, without, however, wholly estranging them from their kindred or from their place of origin.

The only case in which we may legitimately speak of pathology is the case in which one word is erroneously employed for another, whether on account of some resemblance in sound, or as the result of some other accident. Such is the confusion which has arisen between the French words *habit* (clothes) and *habillé* (clothed): this last, which should be written *abillé*, is a

metaphorical expression meaning "prepared, arranged." It was first used in connection with wood. *Du bois en bille* (wood in logs) is still said. The ancient meaning survives in some idioms, such as, *habiller un poulet* (to truss a chicken), *le voilà bien habillé*¹ (he is well equipped). Here, again, we note the constancy of idioms, which continue their existence without paying any attention to the general stream of progress.

A language is not composed solely of words and of expressions: there must also be the machinery for containing and maintaining these materials.

Wilhelm von Humboldt tells us that we bear in our minds a sort of grammar which, sooner or later, ends by leaving its mark on Language. It is what he calls *Die innere Sprachform* (the inner form of Language). There is no reason why we should not accept this expression provided we thoroughly understand it. It is quite clear that the inner linguistic form is not a gift of nature, since it varies in different languages, and since in one single language it becomes modified in the course of ages. The inner form of Language is nothing but remembrance of the mother-tongue. But, in its turn, this remembrance is impressed on the still fluctuating parts of the language, and forces them into the established framework.

This is, moreover, not the only problem of the kind. Here is another no less curious.

¹ We borrow this etymology from a verbal communication made by M. Gaston Paris to the *Société de linguistique*.

The material death of an inflection does not put a stop to its usage. Long after the inflection has disappeared, Language can still appeal to it, and demand the same services as though it still existed. It is a remarkable fact, that the absent inflection continues to render these services. Yet more, we find the grammatical function, of which it was formerly the exponent, still propagating itself, though deprived of all means of expression; so that the most important portion of its history is sometimes that in which it has lost its outward and tangible representative.

This survival of inflections may be observed in all languages. We find a striking example in French in expressions like *la Rue Monsieur le Prince*, *l'Hospice Cochin*, *l'Institut Pasteur*. Although French has for centuries lost the exponent of the genitive, we here use genuine genitives. It is necessary, indeed, in order that a fact of this kind may be produced, that the language should have preserved a certain number of models. Expressions like *l'Hôtel-Dieu*, *l'Église Notre-Dame*, *la Place Dauphine*, have been the type which the language has continued to imitate. We have but to peruse a list of the streets and places of Paris to realise that the genitive has never been more used than since it has been shorn of all sign. We must add indeed that, as this usage is for the most part confined to proper names, the popular consciousness has somewhat changed with regard to it, and at the present day discerns in these names rather a kind of baptism than a case denoting possession.

While on this subject I should say that one must

beware of confusing languages which have had an inflection and lost it, with those which have never possessed one. English, with a facility to be envied by other nations, transforms its substantives into verbs. It takes, for example, the substantive *grace*, and says: *It would grace our life*. What we are here conscious of is an absolute infinitive: though in no way expressed, the idea of the infinitive presents itself unequivocally to our mind. The phrase takes its place in an ancient mould which was formed at the period of the inflection, and which has survived it.

The various languages differ notably on this point. Clearness of speech depends on the greater or less use that is made of these survivals. A language derives its character from what it implies as much as from what it expresses. A just proportion in this matter constitutes the merit of a language, like the proportion of solids and voids in architecture.

German has preserved the turns of phrase of a synthetic language, though many inflections have disappeared or ceased to be recognisable. When Goethe, in his *Iphigenie*, says: *Denkt Kinder und Enkel*, "think of your children and descendants," it is a genitive that he is professedly using. But there is nothing external to indicate it. The difficulty of the German language arises partly from these keys, so to speak, of expression, which sound for the inward ear alone.

This is not the place to multiply examples. But the inner linguistic form to which Humboldt alludes does not limit its action; it is, to speak metaphorically,

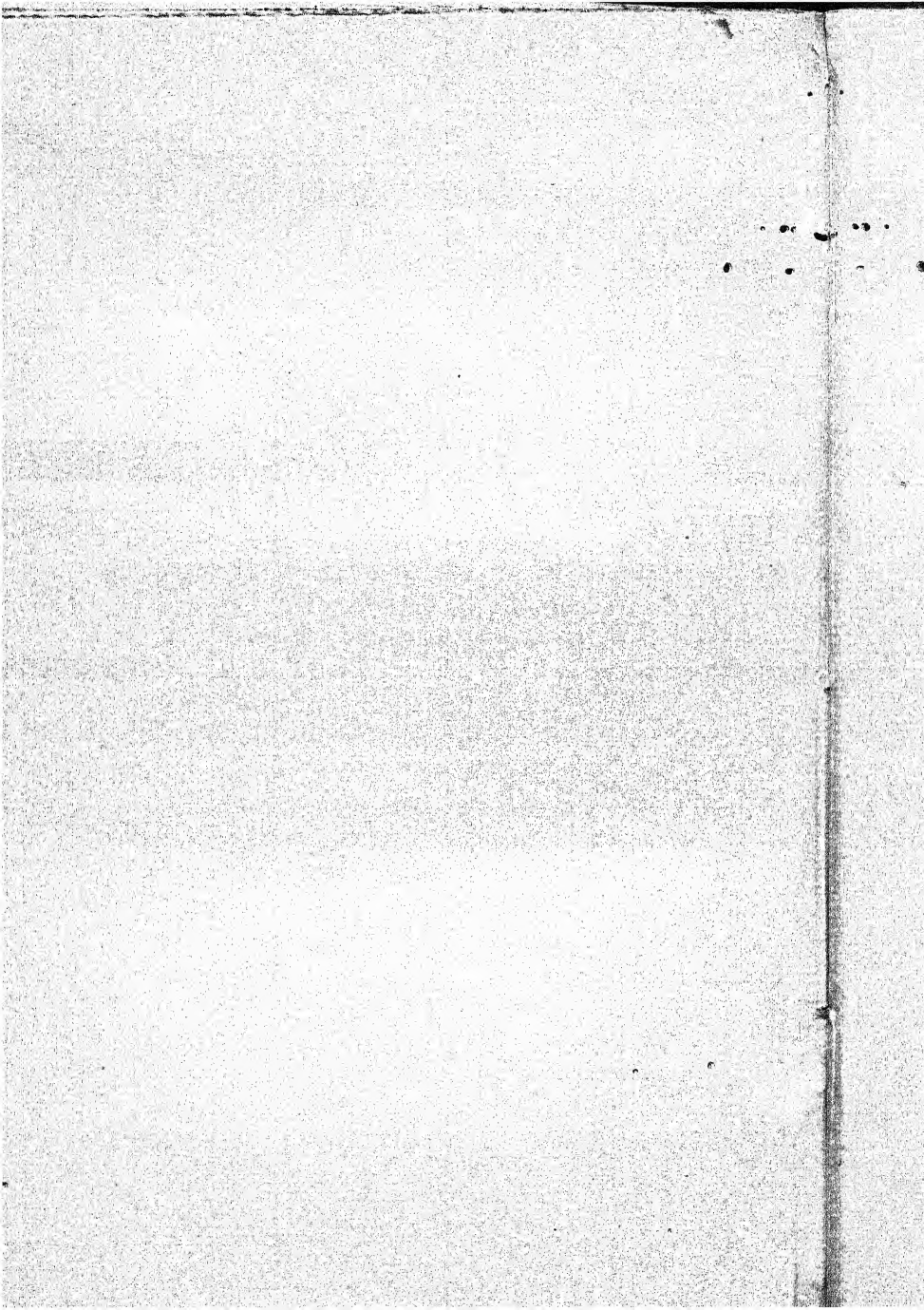
present at all development of Language, skilful in retrieving losses and in rescuing, by means of useful additions, inflections which are in danger, ready to profit by accidents, prompt to extend acquisitions. It is this which has given to English its triple possessive pronoun, *his, her, its*, of which the Romance languages possess no equivalent. It is this which has enriched the French conjugation with tenses unknown to Latin. It causes phenomena of utterly different origin to compete for one and the same goal. It infuses a signification into syllables originally empty or indifferent.

We arrive in this manner at an extremely important and delicate question: how large a share has intention in the facts of Language? Modern philologists in general unhesitatingly reject the idea of intention. The utmost that they will admit is, that accidents which have come about inevitably and quite unexpectedly have been utilised in a spontaneous and unconscious manner. There is no doubt that in former days philologists greatly abused the intentions ascribed to Language, and attributed to it in detail all kinds of distinctions and hidden purposes of which it is innocent. But the contrary doctrine is no less far from the truth. Modern philology seems to confound intelligence with reflection. Though not premeditated, the facts of Language are none the less inspired and directed by an intelligent will. Between the popular act which on the spur of the moment creates a name for some new idea, and the act of the scholar who invents a designation for a recently dis-

covered scientific phenomenon, there is a difference as to the promptitude of result and as to intensity of effort, but none at all as to nature. On each side the faculty brought into play is the same. It would be a great exaggeration to suppose the agent to be, on the one hand, intelligent and free, on the other hand blind and unconscious.

Even that other, more material, department of philology which treats of sounds, Phonetics, for which, together with the unconsciousness of physiological phenomena, the precision of mathematical laws is now claimed, is not of an absolutely different order, for it is the brain as much as the larynx which is the cause of changes. At least a distinction should be made between phenomena which derive from the structure of organs and from an imperious necessity of pronunciation, and those which come from the instinct of imitation and from mere preferences. Without dwelling longer on these considerations, we will merely say that they are passing exaggerations of a genuine and excellent principle, to wit, the regularity of the phenomena of speech. But we have no doubt that philology, abandoning its paradoxes and its prejudices, will become less unjust towards the prime motor of languages, that is to say, towards ourselves, towards the human intelligence. The mysterious transformation which has caused French to issue from Latin, as Persian from Zend, and as English from Anglo-Saxon, and which exhibits on all essential points a striking collection of similarities and identities, is not the mere product of the decadence of sounds and of the wear

and tear of inflections. Beneath these phenomena, where everything speaks to us of ruin, we feel the action of a thought which stands out from and strives to modify the form to which it is bound, and which often derives profit from what at first seems but loss and destruction. *Mens agitat molem.*



APPENDIX

THE SCIENCE OF MEANING¹

By the selection of the Science of Meaning as the subject of my address to-day, I find myself in a somewhat singular position. I am like one who revisits, after a lapse of almost twenty years, the land of his recollections. But the scene before me is not the one so commonly seen on such occasions. I cannot point to a country civilized almost beyond recognition, where flat marsh or rolling prairie has disappeared before fields and orchards, hamlets or homesteads, or even towns and manufactories. The region on which I ask you to-day to interest yourselves with me is almost a waste. It is true that here and there a spot has been cleared. Special contributions of value or importance have been made in the works of a number of inquirers, in those, for example, of Brugmann, Bechtel, Heerdegen, Paul, and Sweet. In the particular province or, if you like, outlying dependency called Grammar, now, we may hope, finally rescued from the thralldom of Logic, there has been great and fruitful

¹ An Inaugural Address delivered on October 6, 1896, at the opening of the Session 1896-7, at University College, London, published in the *Fortnightly Review* of September 1897, and reprinted by the kind permission of Messrs. Chapman and Hall.

activity. Lastly, and this is most important, the materials and appliances for research in this our subject are greatly augmented and improved. But after all, when we consider the actual total of results, we must own, I fear, that the words of an inquirer who has aided the study both with pen and purse do but too faithfully reflect the facts.

"I have found nothing," wrote Lady Welby, in a letter to me at the end of August last, "which contributed except indirectly, implicitly, or casually to the study of 'Sense, Meaning, or Interpretation.'"

I should be wasting the precious moments of your attention were I to enter into a disquisition on the causes of this state of things. One question, however, rises before the mind with such pertinence and such urgency that it must be at once resolved. It may—nay, under the circumstances it must be asked: Are there not good reasons, as we call them, for the neglect which we observe? If the study has so signally failed to attract inquirers, perhaps the explanation is that it is destitute of importance, or that it is too difficult or too uncertain to pursue.

In considering this question I shall, as I am in private duty bound, begin with its aspects towards the subject which I have the honour to represent in this College.

The investigation of meaning is, as I shall hope to show, of considerable importance to other branches of knowledge; but to Comparative Philology it is vital. Language is but articulated sound used as a medium for the interchange of thought between man and man;

and what philologist would care to determine whether *t* is pronounced with the teeth or the palate, or how many vibrations per second there are in the sound-waves of *e*, if that must be the stopping-place? No: to him these researches into the vehicle of language are only auxiliary to that of what it is intended to convey; and to decline the systematic investigation of meaning is to confess that the so-called Science of Language is of its essence unscientific. And here I will pause to answer a not unnatural objection which may possibly have formed in the minds of some. "What," it may be asked, "is the need of this new science? Etymology was planted and has thriven without it. Why should we not do as heretofore, and content ourselves with the tracing of meaning as it appears in each particular manifestation?" The answer is easy. That in the first instance we must so proceed, that further, by groping from one particular to another particular, we may develop a sort of instinct which will keep us from error in the main, may be readily admitted. But what of that? Is this to be an argument against a more systematic procedure? A savage can find his way across a trackless brake; long before cartography was a science or the potency of the needle known, mankind had traversed land and sea. But this is no argument against roads and maps, against the chart and the compass.

I will now ask you to turn with me to observe how far these weighty considerations are recognized in the practice of professed and competent philologists at the present day. In doing so we will confine ourselves, as

elsewhere in this introductory address, to the sufficiently vast region of Indo-European philology; that is, the comparative study of that great group of languages to which our own speech and those of most European and several Asiatic nations belong. The vocal sounds of these nations have been minutely examined and described. The changes of these sounds one into another have been classified and tabulated. Laws have thence been deduced which are formulated and applied with almost mathematical precision. No exceptions are permitted. If one appear, and there are still apparent exceptions, it is instantly explained away. So much care is shown for the form and clothing of language; but how much for its substance and soul? The difference is seen in the very terms employed when an unsatisfactory derivation is censured. If it offend against the canons of meaning, or, to speak more exactly, against the critic's conception of these canons, it is called harsh, unsuitable, or improbable. No reflective critic would employ a stronger term. But let it offend against the generalizations of sound-change, the mildest censure will dub it baseless and arbitrary; most commonly will it be branded as a flagrant breach of phonetic law. And the reason for the difference is plain. In sound-change all the ground has been examined; the facts are known or believed, at least, to be so; criteria of truth and falsehood have been determined. But in the case of meaning not one of these conditions is present. Hence it is that human fancy, that worst rebel against the sciences, driven from the domain of sound-lore, runs riot in the region of

meaning, where it does its best to undo the work of sober judgment and research in the territory from which it has been excluded.

The importance of the science of meaning to Comparative Philology I trust I have shown : of its importance to other branches of science I shall have a word or two to say anon. Its difficulty need not appal us. Since the days of Prometheus *nil mortalibus ardui est* has been the scientific watchword of mankind ; and I think I shall be able to show that this, though difficult, is not one of the most difficult branches of human inquiry.

There remains, however, another question, and that the most momentous of all—the question of the certainty of its results.

We have seen that to impute uncertainty to the results of the investigation of meaning is implicitly to impute it to the results of the science of language as a whole. And, as a matter of fact, the objection usually takes this form. We shall best appreciate the nature and pertinence of this allegation by considering a few examples. You will forgive me if these are too familiar. Strange contrasts and even contradictions are perceived in the past or present meanings of words. The German *schlecht* once meant "simple" or "right," now it means "bad." The original sense of the English *silly* was "happy." The Greek *οὐ πᾶν* ought to mean "not quite" ; it means *not at all*. Nor are such discrepancies confined to contrasts between the present and the past. At this very day the English *rather* expresses a high or a low degree according to circumstances, as "rather

fine," but in answers *Rather!* And the same Latin writer, Plautus, apparently uses *proclivis* (whence comes the English *proclivity*) now for "easy" and now for "difficult." Again, it has been urged, as by Mr. Herbert Spencer, that many words are derived from proper names, and that the etymologist will go sadly wrong if he attempts to find cognates for these in other words, as he will infallibly do if he is not acquainted with the special circumstances of their birth. A favourite example is the verb to "burke," which comes from the name of a murderer executed in 1829, but is now used metaphorically and without any sense of its origin. It is not surprising that, with such examples before them, the critics of Comparative Philology have drawn the conclusion that its conclusions were as a whole uncertain; it would have shown the rarest self-restraint if they had refrained from so doing. But it is most unreasonable to make these "sports" or eccentricities of language a basis of argument unless we know what proportion they bear to the whole. We have seen, or at least have heard, of quadrupeds with five or more legs, of men with six fingers on each hand. But how absurd would it be to use these monstrosities to attack the propositions that a quadruped is an animal with four legs, and that the complement of human fingers is ten!

Professors of my unfortunate subject have occasionally strange questions asked them. A gentleman, who wrote from Ireland, but whose name was obviously German, requested me not so long ago to inform him how many words there were in some four different languages, of

which English and German were two. I was unable, for several reasons, to answer this modest inquiry: one was that I did not know what he understood by a "word." In "boxing the compass" and "boxing a boy's ears" we have, according to the great English Dictionary, two different words "to box." In "booking to Edinburgh" (of a passenger) and "booking an account" of a tradesman is there only one? Certainly not—for the science of meaning. For in *use* the words are as far apart as if they had come from the most different roots. What does this mean to our science? It means that its materials are at once multiplied we cannot tell how many fold. For in each distinct sense of a word we have a fresh fact for the science of meaning. And "fact" is the right name to employ, for the derivation of the sense is, in nearly every case, certain and clear. But furthermore this does not represent, by any means, the whole of the materials available for the study of meaning in any language. A new word or, if you like, a new differentiation of a word is not the growth of a day; time and custom, and the consenting usage of a number of persons, are required before it becomes "established" as we call it. Every human speaker and writer, from time to time, uses words in another than their proper sense, employing metaphor or some other of the figures of speech. Of these figurative uses some pass into common currency; most do not. But all may furnish materials for our student. With such stores to our hands, how perverse it would be to begin with the speech of remote ages, which has been imperfectly and

often, we must fear, erroneously recorded, or to busy ourselves with the conjectured senses of hypothetical forms! No; the study of meaning should, like charity, begin at home, and should, at least at the outset, confine itself to the study of actual living language and well-attested literary documents. Let me fortify what I have said by a reference to Mr. Henry Sweet's paper on "Words, Logic, and Grammar."

"One of the most striking features of the history of linguistic science as compared with zoology, botany, and the other so-called natural sciences, is its one-sidedly historical character. Philologists have hitherto chiefly confined their attention to the most ancient dead languages, valuing modern languages only in as far as they retain remnants of older linguistic formations—much as if zoology were to identify itself with palæontology, and refuse to trouble itself with the investigation of living species, except when it promised to throw light on the structure of extinct ones.

"Philologists forget, however, that the history of language is not one of decay only, but also of reconstruction and regeneration. These processes are of equal, often more, importance than those by which the older languages were formed, and, besides, often throw light on them. They have further the great advantage of being perfectly accessible to the observer. Thus the growth of a language like English can be observed in a series of literary documents extending from the ninth century to the present day, affording examples of almost every linguistic formation."

It is clear, then, that the science of meaning has a more than ample field for its investigations without trenching on doubtful or disputed ground. Those very paradoxes of use, to some of which I have referred, which amuse the curious and alarm the timid inquirer, have each of them its explanation. *Schlecht* did not pass at once from "good" to "bad." Of words, as of

men, it is true *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*. The change took time; it was a journey of stages, all of which can be traced. *Rather*, "somewhat," is not the same word as *rather*! "very." Though they are spelt alike, their sound, as well as their sense, is different. These and other similar examples are not proofs demonstrative of the uncertainty of our science; rather are they helps to the attainment of certainty, as they warn us of the limits outside of which it may not be found.

Having now completed our vindication of the science of meaning as a part of the science of language, we may turn to consider it as a pursuit—what it can teach us and how it may best be pursued.

Throughout the whole history of the human race there have been no questions which have caused more heart-searchings, tumults, and devastation than questions of the correspondence of words to facts. The mere mention of such words as "religion," "patriotism," and "property" is sufficient to demonstrate this truth. Now, it is the investigation of the nature of the correspondence between word and fact, to use these terms in the widest sense, which is the proper and the highest problem of the science of meaning. That every living word is rooted in facts of our mental consciousness and history it would be impossible to gainsay; but it is a very different matter to determine what these facts may be. The primitive conception is undoubtedly that the name is indicative, or descriptive, of the thing. From which it would follow at once that from the presence of the name you could argue to the existence of the thing. This is

the simple conception of the savage, who cannot understand a name which is not significant. There is the well-known story of the Indian who refused to believe that the name of Colonel Short could be applied to a person of that officer's unusual stature. This view is at the bottom of those superstitions, as we now call them, which are found so frequently in ancient and, for that matter, even in modern times. Thus because *penthos* means "mourning" in Greek, Bacchus in the play of Euripides tells Pentheus that his name is the right one for misfortune. Such fancies may be sport for the humourist, as in the adventures of A. Mishap which the *Sea Pie* made so diverting; but they have exercised, nay, with many they still exercise, a most potent influence.

This primitive view of a real connection between the name and the thing has by no means entirely disappeared even from the select circles of scientific inquiry. There it takes the form of an undue exaggeration of the direct testimony of language. The information which Language will give us directly is often either superfluous or misleading; it is that which may be indirectly extracted from her which, in most cases, is alone of value. We may in fact compare her to what the lawyers call a hostile witness who will only give up the truth upon cross-examination. Let me, as before, illustrate by the simplest of cases: it will be in the present instance a proper name. Suppose a person called James Johnson: what facts could a student of language infer? In this case he could, as it happens, draw from the first name a

direct inference as to the person who bore the name; he could correctly deduce the fact that this person was a male. But what about the second name? Could he deduce from it that James Johnson was related by kinship, nearly or remotely, to other Johnsons? Certainly not. James might have been adopted; he might have assumed the name for reasons of his own. Could he conclude that James was an Englishman or even a member of the Anglo-Saxon race? Again we must answer, No. Johnson is a common negro name. So he could not even tell whether James was a black or a white. But what could he deduce indirectly? He could deduce the existence of a progenitor called John, from whom the family of Johnsons derived their descent. And since John, like James, is the name of a male, he could infer that in the community to which these Johnsons belonged descent was traced through the paternal, and not, as in some others, through the maternal line. These deductions are of no value so far as our knowledge of the individual James Johnson is concerned; but they might be of very high value for our knowledge of the family or the community with which he is by name associated.

There is a fascinating branch of philological speculation which has been dignified with the title of Linguistic Palæontology. In Indo-European philology its originator was Adolphe Pictet, an ingenious but capricious Frenchman; its leading exponent now is O. Schrader, a German of far greater learning, judgment, and sobriety. The besetting sin of this form of philological activity,

the value of which within its proper limits I should be one of the first to maintain, is its proneness to false estimates of the direct evidence of language. Thus it has been argued from the vagueness, the insufficiency, and the apparent inconsistency of the expressions for colour in Homer, that the poet or even the whole of his contemporaries were colour-blind. The inference is unwarranted. The fact that the Homeric Greeks have no expression for green does not prove that they could not see the colour, but that they did not want the word. There was no name for magenta until the battle was fought and the dye discovered; but who would venture to assert that it was not till 1859 that the human eye became capable of distinguishing the colour? If these inferences are hazardous when, as in the case of Homer, we have a real language for our foundation, what must they be when the language is itself a creature of inferences? To construct the Indo-European civilization, except in the merest outline, from the Indo-European language, is to build with cards upon the sand.

May I quote some words of Professor Schrader in his work *The Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, with which I thoroughly agree?—

“Comparative Philology of itself is not in a position to reconstruct the primitive civilization of the Indo-Europeans, and if we are to secure our advance step by step over this difficult ground, we can only do so on the condition that the three sisters, Linguistic Research, Prehistoric Research, and History unite in the common work.” (English translation, p. 149.)

Before I leave this portion of my subject, I will endeavour to indicate by an example how the method

of indirect reference may be employed to throw light upon obscure difficulties of language as well as upon the circumstances of times of which no direct knowledge is possible. Of all the apparent contradictions in language that I have met with, there is none at first sight more inexplicable than the usage of *procliuis* to which I have already adverted. In Plautus, the oldest Latin author of whom we possess considerable remains, *procliuis* (lit. "sloping") is clearly used in two opposite senses: "easy" in the phrase *in procliui est*, "difficult" in the expression "*facere rem planam ex procliui*," "to make a matter level," that is "easy," instead of "sloping," that is "difficult." The apparent contradiction is a grave one. If, under the same circumstances, in the same period of a language, the same word may be used for two such opposite ideas, we might well renounce the investigation of meaning as a serious study. Yet every avenue of explanation seems shut. There can be no question of irony or euphemism, through whose workings the apparent meaning of an expression is so often inverted. The phrase is simple and straightforward. Nor, again, can we take refuge in a hypothetical sense for *procliuis*, from which we might derive the meanings of "difficulty" and "ease" by different routes. We cannot say that the word once meant "steep," and that this meaning was retained in certain phrases where difficulty was to be expressed, while in others it was weakened into that of "sloping," "gently sloping," "easy." The original sense of *procliuis* is incontestable; it means "sloping forward" or "down"; *cliuus*,

like its English derivative "declivity," which still bears the imprint of the original meaning, *ner* means a slope, an ascent up which a horse can be driven *ua*. Ovid, referring to a common Latin proverb, says, "*ne* any horse pants at the *beginning* of the *slope*." There is *ex* no avoiding, then, the conclusion that the word in *bo* both these phrases meant originally "downhill." That "*ni* downhill" should come to mean "easy" need surprise no *one*; the metaphor is a common and a very natural *ch* one. But its use for "difficult" is certainly astonishing. *a* On examining this use we remark two things: first, *th* that, unlike the other use, it is not found after Plautus, *s* from which we conclude that it belongs to the older *r* stages of the language; secondly, we observe that *proclivis*, "downhill" in the sense of "difficult," is always *ys* opposed to (and contrasted with) *planus*, that is, to "flat" or "level," from which we infer that the proper application of the use was to vehicles, and that it dates from a period which cannot be very much anterior to Plautus, when Roman waggons and carriages had no efficient *brakes*.

It will have been gathered from what has been said already that we may expect to learn much more from language about persons than about things; that a word, when interrogated, will not, in general, tell us much about that of which it is used, but a good deal about the people who used it. And this leads us directly to the chief of the external uses of the science of meaning—the supplying of materials to the student of human thought. That language is a mirror of man has long been recognized by leading authorities in mental philo-

sophy and psychology. In these sciences direct observation is impossible. The workings of our thoughts and feelings cannot be examined, they can only be inferred; and language, the expression of those thoughts and feelings, furnishes one of the most important modes of inference. Now, if we find an individual applying the name of anything whatever to something else, it is an inevitable conclusion that there is some similarity or connection between the notions whose expression is thus associated. And if we find this to be the case in a number of cases, that is, in the general usage of a word or a group of words by a community, we may—indeed we must—further conclude that this association is no peculiarity of the individual, but that it is the product of something in the mental configuration of that community, or even of the human race. The merit of this evidence is that it is entirely unconscious, and therefore, so far as it goes, absolutely reliable. The mind may have been misled by an unreal or fallacious resemblance in things: that very error is a fact for the *savant*. It may have been moved by a desire to gloss over and disguise an unpalatable idea: that repugnance, that evasion, are duly noted and recorded by the psychologist. After the picture which I drew at the beginning of this address of the present condition of the science of meaning, I should involve myself in flagrant inconsistency if I referred to the finds that might be expected from this almost virgin soil otherwise than quite tentatively and with the greatest reserve. But the importance of the subject is such that I cannot bring myself to say

absolutely nothing upon it. I will therefore mention two or three remarkable tendencies of language in general upon which we may hope to have more light hereafter.

It is not strange to find "concrete" expressions used for "abstract," *e.g.* it seems quite natural to say "this is the mark of a good man" instead of "a mark of goodness." But what can be the reason for the converse substitution? Why should Latin, a language which is unusually prone to the concrete, use *servitium* and *servitus*, "slavery," for "slaves"? This usage, which is by no means confined to any one language, seems to indicate some relation between concrete and abstract ideas, the nature of which has not been fathomed. Again, a number of the languages possessing the definite article place it when used with certain adjectives in a different position to the one which it usually occupies. One of these adjectives is *all*. Why do we say "*all* the land," but "*the* vast land," "*the* whole land"? This might be thought an accident of English expression but for the fact that in Greek and in the Romance languages descended from Latin (which, as you know, did not possess an article) the same position has been developed independently. Lastly, in the evolution of the powers of the mind a very important *rôle* has been assigned to the sensations of the muscles, by which are meant the sensations of effort and strain which accompany movements of the body, the support of weights, and the like. Now, it has interested me to observe that a very large number of the words which language uses for thinking

are derived from words such as "ponder," "to weigh," which express or imply the presence of muscular play.

There is yet another use to which the methods of the science of meaning may be applied. It is one replete with interest and not devoid of profit, though it cannot claim the importance of those which have just been mentioned. I mean the deduction of individual and national character from an examination of their language. How far it would be worth while to investigate character by means of its reflection in speech we are not in a position to judge, as this matter has never been properly investigated. But the observation that national character is reflected in national speech is one which essay writers have taken for their own, and I fear that now it runs the risk of being considered too hackneyed to be important. I will therefore confine myself to reading a passage from Marsh's Lectures, which will admirably illustrate the method employed. You must not suppose that I necessarily subscribe to all the conclusions of Lander.

'I think the language of Italy is a case in point. Lander argues the profound and hopeless depravity of the Italians from the abject character of their complimentary and social dialect, and the phraseology expressive of their relations with their rulers or other superiors, as well as from the pompous style by which they magnify the importance of things in themselves insignificant, and their constant use of superlatives and intensives with reference to trifling objects and occasions. Were it true that the Lombards, the Piedmontese, the Tuscans, and the Romans of the present day had not inherited, but freely adopted, the dialect of which Lander gives a sort of anthology, it would argue much in favour of his theory. A bold, manly, and generous, and truthful people certainly would not choose to say "*umiliare una supplica*," to humiliate a supplication, for, to present a memorial; to style the strength which awes, and

the finesse which deceives, alike "onestà," honesty or respectability; to speak of taking human life by poison, not as a crime, but simply as a mode of facilitating death, "ajutare la morte"; to employ "pellegrino," foreign, for admirable; to apply to a small garden and a cottage the title of "un potere," a power; to call every house with a large door "un palazzo," a palace; a brass earring, "una gioja," a joy; a present of a bodkin, "un regalo," a royal munificence; an alteration in a picture, "un pentimento," a repentance; a man of honour, "un uomo di garbo," a well-dressed man; a lamb's fry, "una cosa stupenda," a stupendous thing; or a message sent by a footman to his tailor, through a scullion, "una ambasciata," an embassy.' (Marsh, *Letters on the English Language*, Lecture X., from Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*, Second Series, No. V.)

I now come to the last division of my subject—the present and urgent needs of the Science of Meaning. In the first place it lacks a terminology. An attempt was made to provide it with one in some posthumous articles which appeared in the earlier volumes of the *Journal of Philology*¹ from the pen of the late Professor Grote, the able brother of the more famous historian, which I mention here because apparently they are not as well known as they deserve to be. Grote's nomenclature is, however, too cumbrous and repellent to be generally adopted. I lay no stress on the fact, significant though it be, that, unlike philology and its other branch phonology, it is itself at present without a special designation and must be indicated by a periphrasis. It is a matter so much more serious that its very subject-matter is unnamed.

I have hitherto called this *words*. But the term is unsuitable. The objects with which our science deals

¹ IV. pp. 53 foll., 157 foll., V. pp. 153 foll.

are the expressions of ideas or notions, with their connections and qualifications, in speech. These may be and commonly are words, no doubt; but they need not be. They may be groups of words or phrases; they may be tones, stresses, or pauses of the voice. In English, for example, as no doubt you know, an assertion may be changed to a command or to a question by a change in the modulation of the voice. New titles then are required, and I propose to take them from the Greek, that storehouse of scientific terms, and to call the expression of a single idea or notion a *rheme*, from *ῥῆμα*, "a thing said," and to distinguish the expressions of qualifications and connections of such *rhemes* by calling them *epirrhemes*, though, as a general term, *rheme* may serve for both. If these terms be approved of, I should propose to call our science *Rhematology*, or the study of rhemes. Thus, in "hands off the table," we may say that there are four *rhemes* (more strictly three rhemes and an *epirrheme*), *hands*, *the-table*, *off*, expressing the notion of removal and the tone of the voice which conveys the speaker's will. But in "to lay hands on the plate" there are only two, because "to lay hands on" stands for a single notion. My little daughter said the other day, "I know three new words—scandalous, Matthew's man, and pretty creature." She said "words," but she meant "rhemes"; for to her the noun with the genitive in the one case and the noun with the adjective in the other are single notions, though for us they are double. I take the sense of singleness or unity in a conception as the test of singleness in a

rheme. By this I mean that it must present itself to the mind as such ; that the mind must feel it as single. I know of no other criterion. But it is by no means easy to say in a given case whether this sense of unity or singleness is present. It will be one of the most delicate tasks of rhematological inquiry to follow and ascertain the origin and growth of this unifying sense. The contention that in "laying hands on," whether applied to a burglar or a bishop, there is only one rheme, will probably be a shock to some; but all will admit it in the case of the Greek ἐπιχειρεῖν, "to put hand to" or "undertake," a word of similar origin. And the reason is only this, that in the Greek word we are further from the point of fusion, and that the completeness of this is indicated in the external form ; for ἐπιχειρεῖν is a single word, and "lay hands on" three.

I must now say a word or two upon the contents of rhemes. I shall speak here only of rhemes which are expressed by the same sounds, or, as we say, by the same words. These often differ from one another as much as the very different persons who bear the same name.

"Strikes the clock? The hour is gone.
Strikes the man? The day is won."

In these two lines *strikes* is used first for as simple a rheme as can be found, "the impact of a sound-wave on the ear," and in the second for one of very great complexity, which perhaps you will excuse me from analyzing.

In the composition of rhemes we may distinguish the

principal or central portions from the outlying and accidental portions. Any name will illustrate this distinction. Ask a dairy-maid and a New York belle what they understand by a *cow*. It will be impossible to miss the constancy of the central portion of the rheme. But say, "You will meet a cow round that corner," and observe the effect. You will as clearly appreciate the variation in its accessory portions. Here, as elsewhere, you will observe that the central portion of a rheme enables us to identify it, and the accessory portions to reason fallaciously about it.

If the differences of conception are so great, and, by consequence, the field of misapprehension so large, in rhemes whose centre is strongly rooted in a physical sense, what must this be in rhemes which have no such attachment? If "cow" excite mental feelings so different, what may we expect for "virtue"? Let the history of moral philosophy give the answer to this question. Thus much is clear, that as we rise higher into the reasons of abstraction, there is a tendency for the central, the constant part, the core we may call it, of a rheme to shrink and diminish; while the accidental extraneous and fluctuating portions spread and increase, so that it reminds us of nothing so much as a comet, whose tail is out of all proportion to its head. Some say (the matter is far beyond our present scope) that sometimes the nucleus disappears altogether, and all that is left is the mere sounds which constitute the name and a shifting, shapeless nebula of associations, as unsuitable to be the objects of knowledge as is a will-o'-the-wisp

itself. Such rhemes are those meant when it is said that men have often given their lives for a name. I have dwelt with some emphasis on this topic because it has a special bearing upon our own language—this modern English, of which we have many reasons to be proud. The looseness and ambiguity of English expression is well known both to men of letters and statesmen. That great and statesmanlike writer, the late Sir John Seeley, once observed to me in conversation, that this was so great as to make it a most difficult matter to draft a treaty in English. For my own part, I must confess that as a vehicle of clear expression I prefer Latin, in spite of its inherent inferiority to my native tongue, and I shall be only too happy if to-day I have not given another illustration of the striking words of R. L. Stevenson: "Do you understand me? God knows, I should think it highly improbable."

We see now how great to our science is the importance of *lexicography*. The lexicons and dictionaries in most languages are far from perfect; but we have a few models to point to. Such are Littré's great dictionary of French, and that of English by Dr. Murray and Mr. Bradley now in progress, to which it is the duty of every Englishman who can afford it to subscribe. A model lexicon will provide us with a complete biography of every word. It will give all its senses, illustrated by well-chosen and significant examples. It will distinguish carefully between the usages of poetry, set prose, familiar conversation, slang, and vulgar speech. It will exhibit them arranged in order, and, as far as possible, in the

natural order of development. (I may observe in passing, that *in this respect* the Latin lexicon of Lewis and Short is superior to the Greek one of Liddell and Scott.) Above all, it must never lose sight of chronology. The date of the first appearance and, if possible, of the last appearance of a usage must be recorded. Here the New English Dictionary has set an example which the lexicography of other modern and ancient tongues will do well to follow. A special department of lexicographical study which may be separately pursued is the discrimination of synonyms. Much good work has been done here in many languages. In Greek I may mention the researches of Dr. J. H. Schmidt.

A cognate subject is the one to which I have already made reference—the investigation of *metaphors* and *figurative language*. This also may be pursued apart.

There is no stage of language which the student of the science of meaning may neglect. He must have no prejudices, no predilections. But he will find that for certain purposes some stages and forms of languages are more instructive than others. Foremost among these may be placed the languages of savages. The great propagandist societies and their devoted emissaries have earned the imperishable gratitude of humanity by all that they have done to rescue from oblivion these perishing forms of speech. But it is not enough to know what is the word (that is, the sounds) which a savage language uses for a certain idea: we must know how he uses it, and why. In most of the dictionaries of savage languages that I have seen there is little help given towards

determining the original sense of a word. What is done here must be done quickly: savage habits of thought can only be properly interpreted by actual intercourse with savages; and these races and their languages are rapidly disappearing.

The rustic must excuse me if I mention his speech next in order to the savage's. There is ample material for the study of bucolic expression in the numerous and copious dialects of English which are now about to receive a fitting home in the dialect dictionary of Dr. Wright, the publication of which has already begun. The dialects which have resulted when one race or nation has adopted the speech of another have a special importance. Such lingos as Negro-English, Negro-French, Pigeon-English, have a value for us out of all proportion to their literary merits. We can gather from them how far the mental stock of the two races coincides by observing which portions of the total stock of rhemes have been retained, which rhemes have been rejected as too strange or dropped as superfluous.

The language of children, for specimens of which I may refer you to the writings of my distinguished colleague and friend, Professor Sully, must also be pressed into the service. Its almost savage primitiveness and simplicity throws light upon much that might otherwise be obscure.

Nor, lastly, must the diseases and imperfections of language be neglected. The study of the phenomena of Aphasia, or the destruction of the power of rational speech in all its forms and stages, has long been recog-

nized as an adjunct to psychology. To us even its slightest manifestations, what are called mere slips of the tongue, are worthy of serious attention.

And now I come to the last but the greatest and most urgent need of our science. When we survey it, we see a subject of almost limitless extent, but of workers not a score. "Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto." "A gulf immense, a swimmer here and there." I hope, I trust that this state of things will not last much longer. I trust that nothing I have said to-day will contribute towards its continuance. I feel sure that I have not underrated the difficulties of the subject. I fear only that I may have given you an exaggerated impression of their magnitude. It behoves me then to say, that neither in itself is this the most difficult of studies, nor is it now in its most difficult stage. It does not demand the rare and intense thinking of the higher mathematics, or the facility of invention and delicacy of manipulation which are essential to success in some of the physical sciences. It is as yet in its beginnings; its prime need is the collection of facts. The collecting and arranging of facts does not require the highest energies of the human intellect. Industry, care, and circumspection it does require; and these no subject can dispense with. This is a study in which, if analogy is of any value as an argument, Englishmen may expect to excel. It is also, as I have said, one that has a special value for Englishmen. There is no need to travel to remote climates or distant ages. It is a small disadvantage to be unable to do so. The student of this subject must begin with

what he knows. In your own speech, in that of your friends, in the monuments of your native language—here you are on familiar ground. Your facts can be checked, your conclusions verified. The experience so gained will grow into an aptitude which will guide you safely through regions where the way is darker, the access more precipitous, the foothold less secure. The labour will be its own reward. I do not know if in anything I have said to-day there is sufficient hint or indication of the great and varied attractiveness of these studies ; but this I can honestly asseverate—that I have not consciously turned out of my path to paint an alluring picture ; and I therefore feel myself free to conclude, with expressing my deep and sincere conviction that those who venture upon the exploration of these regions will find themselves well repaid.

J. P. POSTGATE.

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